THE

STROLLING PLAYER;

OR,

LIFE AND ADVENTURES

OF

WILLIAM TEMPLETON.

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IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

WE ARE SUCH STUFF AS DREAMS ARE MADE OF.
SHAKESPEAR.

LONDON:

PRINTED BY B. M'MILLAN,
BOW-STREET, COVENT-GARDEN:
SOLD BY H. D. SYMONDS, PATERNOSTER-ROW.

1802.

THE

STROLLING PLAYER.

CHAPTER I.

I HAD now attained the summit of all earthly joy: how to maintain it was the question. Our stock of money was inconsiderable; nor could we think of any longer infringing on the generosity of our friends. It became me, therefore, immediately to seek a permanency.

Still did the stage present itself to my hopes, and seemed the only sphere on which I could exist. Caroline, too,

thought of it with as much partiality as myself. We played several scenes before our friends, to their great pleasure.

The conception of Caroline was just, and her action elegant; but in impassioned parts she inclined to tameness. Her tones were sweet, and she managed them with the happiest art; but yet the greatest requisite was wanting—*feeling*. She pleased the eye and judgment, but the heart remained untouched. Yet there were very few better qualified to take the lead in a country theatre.

It was at length resolved that I should set out in search of engagements; which resolution, at the expiration of a week, I put in execution; for, hearing that a company were performing at a town fifteen miles off, I proceeded thither, and arrived at it about seven in the evening.

First

First securing myself a lodging for the night, at a public-house, I proceeded to the theatre, which was then open; where inquiring for the manager, I was introduced, and found him dressing for the part of clown, in the pantomime.

He was a striking contrast to my last master; being young, and extremely rusticated in his manner. Upon my proposal to him, he made answer—that, if we suited, he could find room for us. I then informed him, that Caroline was new to the stage, and where I had played; giving him my name at the same time. He shook his head at the first, but brightened up at the last, and confessed that he had heard me spoken of in such high terms by a friend of his, who saw my performance, that he needed no other proof of my merit, and agreed to engage me from the ensuing Monday, with Caroline also; but said,

 he

he could not afford more than a guinea a week for our joint services, with benefits.

"And if you should be hard pushed," concluded he, "why you shan't starve, while I've a mutton-chop to cut."

I answered, that I would accept his terms for the present, and that we would talk farther upon it when we became better known to each other.

I then took a survey of the house, which greatly pleased me, as it was elegantly built, and neatly fitted up. I next got acquainted with the company, and conversed with most of them. The play was over, and they were all preparing for the entertainment, which was a new pantomime. I did not stop to see it, but taking leave, returned to my

my lodging, and being tired with my long walk, supped immediately and went to bed.

In the morning I arose at six o'clock, and breakfasted with the landlord, whom I informed of my engagement, and requested his assistance in procuring me a lodging against my return, which he kindly promised.

I took the advantage of a fish-cart that was going ten miles of my road, for which I paid a shilling, and walking the remainder of my way, arrived at the house of my friends just as they were sitting down to tea.

I immediately imparted the success of my journey, and bade Caroline prepare herself for *Juliet*, with all expedition.

The day of our departure being come, many tears were shed by us and our friends, who prayed that we would always consider their house as our home in time of need.

Our conveyance was a chaise Mr. Wilmot had borrowed from a neighbouring farmer's, and which he would have driven himself, had we not insisted on the contrary, from a knowledge of his being engaged another way; so that he consented to his lad's accompanying us, for the purpose of bringing it back.

On entering the town, I drove to the public-house where I had before lodged, and ordered refreshment for ourselves and the lad, whom I recompensed for his trouble. The landlord himself conducted us to the lodging he provided, agreeable to his promise. It was at a grocer's shop: the family consisting

sisting of an elderly widow and her son, a youth of about fourteen, both of whom seemed well pleased at our appearance. At their earnest request, we agreed to sup and spend the evening with them, and in half an hour we were the best friends in the world: they proposed to board, as well as lodge us, observing, it would save an infinity of trouble, in providing and dressing our own victuals. Caroline being willing, it was agreed that we should give sixteen shillings a-week. This being settled, we remained chatting till twelve o'clock, and then retired to bed.

At ten the following morning, with Caroline under my arm, I went to the lodging of Mr. Frank (the manager), whom I found at breakfast, in company with his lady, who appeared to be about twenty years older than himself, extremely fat and unwieldy, and with a

countenance capable of but one expression, which was a good-natured conceit.

She had fallen in love with her hero, as many others of her sex have done, for the sake of his profession, in which she took great delight; though her ambition never reached higher than to the Nurse in *Romeo*; but she was generally content with a part in pantomime; such as the mother of Columbine, or a silent fairy; and indeed, so that she could but hobble across the stage once or twice a week, she was perfectly contented.

She had been, as I afterwards learnt, a country shop-keeper, and Mr. Frank having gained her good graces, thought it worth his while to marry her and her little fortune, of two or three hundred pounds. With this, he purchased a

share

share of his present property, and his partner soon after dying, left the whole to him.

This happy pair received us with the utmost good-nature: Mr. Frank, after some conversation, desired us to be ready in our parts for Thursday, and to attend rehearsal the day before.

We had proposed to him the parts of *Romeo* and *Juliet*, which he highly commended. Having thus adjusted our business, we took leave, and returned to our lodgings, where we immediately commenced our studies. Such was the ardour of Caroline, that she would scarcely allow herself time to enjoy her meals, or rest.

Next morning we attended rehearsal.

Caroline was no sooner introduced

behind the scenes than her spirits seemed to desert her. This arose from her disappointment on viewing the place and company, which in her imagination she had painted in much happier colours; and, indeed, the latter were but little calculated, either to raise emulation, or a respect for the profession; for, with the exception of two or three, I never saw such a set of scarecrows.

When Caroline began her business, she spoke so indifferently, that the ladies heard her without the least sensations of envy, or apprehension of a future rivalship. They affected to cheer and encourage her, but spite of their attention, poor Caroline gave no hopes of success. For my part, I made myself perfectly easy on her account, well knowing the extent of her abilities, and that her depression was merely temporary.

The rehearsal over, we withdrew home. On our way, Caroline reclined upon my arm, and in vain attempted to hide her fears from my observation; but it was beyond her experience, for the moment she entered her room, she burst into tears, which ceased not till, by various efforts, I at last laughed them away.

On her next day's rehearsal, she had by no means conquered her depression, but returned home nearly as heartless as she had been the day before. At last the hour of trial came on. She walked between me and our landlady's son, who, on our arrival at the theatre, quitted us, and stationed himself in the pit.

I had previously given Caroline every hint I could suggest, in order to dispel her terrors, and was happy on observ-

ing that my advice was not lost. I directly, amidst her hopes and fears, led her to the ladies' dressing-room, and then hastened to my own. The properties for the first performers were very respectable, but for the subordinate ones, most despicable. I chose an appropriate dress, and having my hair put in order, or rather, out of order, for the lovelorn youth, was soon equipped.

Romeo had hitherto been in the hands of a tall meagre figure, whose name was Fenwick, and who, one would have thought, had received his education amongst the brotherhood of Quakers; for his every word, and movement, bore the air of premeditation. But he was affable, and appeared solicitous to render me every assistance in his power. He had, for some time, sustained the heroic line, but observed to me, that

he

he was happy in the relief I should afford him, as his constitution was not equal to the fatigue. Farther acquaintance with this gentleman, proved that he had an excellent heart.

The next in honour, was a handsome young fellow named Case, remarkable for nothing but the symmetry of his person, and a Stentorian power of lungs. He was insufferably vain, and overbearing, disdaining to treat any one with common civility, not even excepting me, though a stranger; for at one time, when in passing, he had nearly knocked me down, he cried out,

" D—n it, stand clear of the gangway."

" Pardon me, my friend," said I, " I meant not to keep you from your station—the gangway is the place at

which,

which, on board of ship, they flog the unruly."

Mr. Fenwick smiled, but Mr. Case deigned not an answer.

Mr. Frank, I found, took the lead in ludicrous comedy, and though his humour could not be called rich, it was above mediocrity.

There was one more person who strongly attracted my attention, named Burrows. He had two children with him, who called him father. The good-nature of this man seemed predominant over every other quality of his mind, and was at each moment breaking out, but a glance upon his offspring seemed to check the indulgence of it. His wife had an engagement as well as himself, but both of them were in the humblest line; their joint salaries amounting to

no

no more than fourteen shillings a week. Amongst the rest of the company existed the most undistinguished equality: they had been tamed into submission by a long depression of poverty and scorn: for, either by the singularity of their appearance, or their acting, any play under their hands was sure of a transformation. At all events, if their audience deigned to smile at their comedy, a tragedy in their hands was sure to meet unbounded laughter. In short, such an unhappy set were hardly ever huddled in a pack before.

I was no sooner ready, than I issued forth to view Caroline; whom I found waiting for me in the green-room. Her dress was simple, yet elegant: she appeared still the same; for the hand of Art laboured in vain to render her more lovely. Mr. Fenwick grasped my hand, and told me I was a happy man.

man. Mr. Case grew humble in her company, and deemed her conversation worthy his attention; while Mr. Frank strove to raise her spirits, and his good-natured wife, with a smile, adopted her for a daughter.

CHAP. II.

MR. CASE was the *Tibalt* of the night, and he condescended to request I would practise the fighting-scene with him before the play commenced; with which I readily acquiesced.

"Mark me," said he, "I shall use the broad-sword style, as I think that has the best stage-effect."

"Any style you please," answered I, and stood upon my guard.

Now I plainly divined the aim of Mr. Case, who had not attained that perfection in his profession, which consists in hiding the emotions of the heart

heart by a composure of features; and I now perceived by the stifled grin upon his countenance, that he meant to render himself eminent for skill and courage, in the eyes of the company, and me ridiculous. To effect which, he came on with a most furious assault—I plainly saw what little mercy I was to expect, had he been equal to his conceit. I contented myself with parrying off his blows, without aiming one at him, and he finding himself opposed with unusual dexterity, became more cautious. Still I acted only on the defensive, and proved my security from his attempts, to the admiration of all present. At length, exulting in my superiority, and anxious to revenge myself for his impertinence, I stepped back, and cried aloud—

"Now mark *me*, Sir; I have *played* with you long enough, and it is time I should

should return your attacks; therefore, defend yourself." On which I advanced, and making a feint at his thigh, gave him such a blow upon the head, that he staggered to the farther end of the room; but recovering himself, and being ashamed of so easy a defeat, he again came on; but with extreme circumspection, however, and instead of assaulting me, confined himself merely to the defensive. But it availed him little, for, making another feint, I brought round my foil, and struck him with such force upon his sword-arm, that his weapon and his courage fell at the same instant, and he sneaked off, rubbing his bruise, and whining with its pain, to the diversion of the whole company, who, instead of condoling with him, laughed at his misfortune.

The play-bills had given out, that the

the part of *Romeo* was to be performed by a Gentleman who had played at the first theatres in the kingdom with unbounded applause, and *Juliet* by his Lady, being her first appearance. To that, might be attributed the fulness of the house, for it had never been, as Mr. Frank observed, so crowded before.

The curtain soon drew up, and I shortly made my entry. I went through the scene with much ease; for experience had entirely banished those fears that so discompose a young actor. The audience gave me a very flattering reception. I had no sooner finished, than I flew to Caroline, who, spite of her preceding cheerfulness, now trembled beneath her apprehensions.

A short time brought the eventful moment,

moment, when Caroline, for the first time, stood forth in her public sphere.

Mr. Frank had requested that she would curtsey to the audience, in order that they might easily distinguish her from the masks; but this she forgot to perform, and so far was she from attending to any thing, that it was with difficulty she could support herself. Mrs. Frank, who performed the Nurse, strove all she could to rouse her; but that task was reserved for me.

Having spoken my preceding sentences, I approached, and taking her hand, before I proceeded in my business, whispered—

"O, Caroline! Think how much depends upon this moment!"—Then uttered in the language of Shakespear,

"If

"If I prophane with my unhallowed touch, this holy shrine, the gentle fine is this: my lips, two ready pilgrims, stand to smoothe this rough touch with a tender kiss."

Conceive my delight, when she returned her sentence with the sweetest tone imaginable.

It was in those playful parts where she so eminently excelled, for where passion was not required, she stood unrivalled.

The audience felt the beauty of her delivery, and honoured her with a loud burst of approbation. Her fears from that moment were dispelled, and she finished the scene with uncommon ease and vivacity. On her exit, I believe there was not an idle hand in the theatre, and, at the wings, she was met by the congratulations of all our company.

After thanking them, she fixed her

speaking eyes on me, and there read the applause most grateful to her feelings. I could not restrain the happiness I felt, but caught her in my arms, and expressed it in repeated wishes for her future success.

She improved in every scene, and I was so desirous of beholding her from the front of the theatre, that I huddled on a great coat, and stationed myself behind one of the front boxes, where I heard every body loud in her praise, both in her acting and her person. She did indeed look charmingly, and my partiality could not repress the following comparison of Homer, which I whispered to myself:

"Such Venus shines, when with a measured bound,
"She, smoothly gliding, skims th' harmonious round:
"When with the Graces in the dance she moves,
"And fires the gazing Gods with ardent loves."

She surpassed my warmest hopes; and I think the most rigid critic of a London audience would have confessed her merit.

In the tomb-scene she discovered her want of feeling: it proved beyond her powers, and from her even manners, the effect was greatly lost; but she had gained the good opinion of the audience, and there they amply expressed it.

The curtain dropped, and Caroline hastened to undress, while I stopped to receive the congratulations of Mr. and Mrs. Frank, both for my own and her performance.

I had no sooner left them, than I was accosted by two highly-finished country bucks, who with much affected impudence, demanded to speak with the lady who had played *Juliet*. Will-

ing

ing to know their aim, I answered, that she was then preparing to go home, and would be at liberty in a short time.

"O d—n it," said one, "never mind her being ready. Come, my fine fellow, lead us to her directly, and we'll reward you."

"It is a grateful service," replied I, "to act under a liberal master; but the lady is not yet dressed."

"O, the *nakeder* the better!" exclaimed he. "I have business of importance with her——You *understand* me; so bring me to her directly."

I then desired they would wait till I called her; to which they consented.

From a spirit of levity unworthy of

any husband, I immediately proceeded to the door of her dressing-room, where calling her, she instantly came out; and seeing she had resumed her own dress, I begged she would suffer me to introduce her to two gentlemen, who had earnest business with her.

"You must not leave me then," said she, and obeyed.

"This," said I to the two heroes, when I had reached them, "is the lady whom you are so solicitous to speak with."

The settled seriousness and calm dignity of Caroline, seemed to awe their assurance, and they for some minutes stood staring at each other, like two boobies in a ball-room. Finding them still silent, and seeing they werectrangers, she said,

"It

"It appears you are mistaken, gentlemen, and I am not the person whom you seek."

Resuming his courage, and fearful, perhaps, of losing his imagined prize, the boldest of them stammered out,

"Yes, Ma'am, you are the lady: if you'll do us the favour to let us say a few words with you in *private*, we shall be much beholden to ye."

This bold essay so happily acted upon the spirits of his companion, that, putting on the most gallant air he was master of, he seized her hand, and broke forth as follows:

"Yes, my pretty *Julot*, this here an't a fitting place to talk *secrets* in, so we'll thank ye to retire a bit."

"If," replied Caroline, "you have any secrets worth relating, impart them to my husband; or, if your business be too important to disclose in this place, to-morrow we shall be at leisure; but take care you don't deceive yourselves, in misconceiving me." So saying, she left them to the surprize her conduct had occasioned, and which was doubtless so different from their expectations.

The moment the foremost had recovered from his stupor, he offered me his hand, and cried out,

"Well, by G—d, master, I ask your pardon, I meant no harm; for, d'ye see, she's a d—d fine girl, and I hope will always prove true to ye: so, to drown all animosity, come and drink a bottle with us; but if you won't, why I can't help it, and I hope there's no

harm

harm done; for d—n my bl—d, but if she was single, I'd marry her to-morrow."

Thanking him for his offer and compliment, I observed, that I was far from feeling any offence at his mistake; but rejoiced in the lesson it had afforded him, by which he had learnt, that the votaries of the stage, and virtue, were by no means incompatible. They then shook me heartily by the hand, swore I was a d—d good fellow, hoped to see me again, and parted.

The above gentlemen, I concluded, had either shared the caresses of some free and easy daughter of *Thespis*, and imagined they were all kind alike; or had that night assumed an impudence which their little experience could not support with proper grace.

I met them a few days after, when they dragged me into a coffee-house, and gave me an excellent treat; after which I saw no more of them.

The moment I was ready, I rejoined Caroline, whom I found in the most serious temper. It arose from the shock her delicacy had received; but she soon banished it, on my promising never to expose her so again.

The manager gave us for the following night, characters in a popular comedy of that day; and Caroline, anxious to commence her study, begged me to go home immediately. I obeyed, and we were shortly at our lodgings. Our landlady's son was there before us. He had been so impatient to relate our success to his mother, that he staid not to see the after-piece, and while at the door, we heard him loud in our commenda-

mendation. The good lady received us with increased satisfaction, and kept us in chat till eleven o'clock, when we retired to our room; and Caroline had learnt half her part before she went to rest.

CHAP. III.

THE following morning she resumed her study, before any other person in the house was stirring, and by twelve at noon, she was perfectly mistress of her character.

It was of great advantage to us both in rehearsing together, when we could freely ask each other's advice, and thus mutually improve ourselves.

The theatre was open but every other evening. We therefore were at our own disposal that day.

In the afternoon we walked round the town, observing and observed. Caroline attracted the observance of all who

who passed her, very often much to her confusion; for some of the passengers would suddenly stop in the midst of a hasty walk, some yards before her, and stare till she had passed them. This custom my country-people possess in a more eminent degree, I believe, than those of any other, excepting the wilds of Africa. I have myself, long as I have been accustomed to the public eye, been frequently put to the blush by those disciples of *Lavater*. I have often thought there must be something singular in my appearance; and perhaps, unconscious of it, there was. The continued bustle of a country actor's life, and the different expressions with which he is constantly varying his features, may stamp on them a peculiarity which persons of a more serene employment escape.

We had not walked half an hour, before

fore our ears were saluted with the following rhapsody:

"I tell you what, Kate, the curse of disobedience has fallen upon me. I have been getting brats and starving a d—d deal too long; so, d'ye hear, I am resolved to enter on a *new* stage, and try my fortune there."

To which a female voice returned, in the most plaintive accent imaginable: "O George, consider!—consider what is to become of me and these poor infants! Surely if I am content to bear the severity of your fortune, you ought not to complain. Any life is better than a soldier's; in your present one, at least there is liberty. I could see you at the ploughshare with pleasure, and I myself would labour in the field, or submit to any drudgery, for the sake of these helpless babes: look at them, O

dear

dear George, look at their innocence! Have you the heart to leave them to want?"

By this time we had reached the parties, who stood before the door of a public-house in a lane at a little distance. Amongst the crowd I distinguished a recruiting-serjeant, his drummer and fifer. But if the ejaculation I had just heard surprized me, how was that surprize increased on observing it had issued from the lips of Mr. Burrows, one of my brother-actors, who stood in the midst of the assembly, with his head graced by the cocked hat of the petty-officer, while his wife, with one infant in her arms, and the other at her side, stood clinging to, and in vain attempting to force him from his resolution.

Before I could penetrate the crowd,

the serjeant exclaimed—" My good woman, it's no use your making this piece of work now, because, d'ye see, it's too late; for your husband has been a king's man this good hour: and d—n me, ye need not be ashamed of his livery; for by G—d I don't see much in his present appearance to snivel after."

With that, lifting up the skirt of the poor player's coat, and exposing it to the populace, he burst into an immoderate fit of laughter, in which he was joined by his drummer and fifer, although no one else could feel the force of his jest. The poor woman no sooner found her entreaties to be unavailing, than she burst into tears.

The moment I reached Burrows, I seized his hand, and demanded the meaning of what I heard and saw.

" Why, the meaning of it is," answered he, " that I have turned soldier. Look ye, my friend, I have been a player about five years. I commenced that trade in direct opposition to my friends, who, in consequence, turned their backs upon me. I was fool enough to think, that because I liked the profession, I must infallibly succeed in it. But experience has proved the direct contrary. Such a d—d starving life a beggar never led, as I have, and Ch—st send that a beggar never may. Beside, it is not only myself, but my Kate and children who suffer also; and it is for their sakes that I have now acted as you find: and between ourselves, Mr. Templeton, I think that a soldier's life can afford as many comforts as s Strolling Player's. At all events, they are as well clothed, and I believe there are very few who go to bed with an empty belly. But, O Templeton! when have

I laid down on my pillow without hunger, or when have I seen my infants smile in plenty, since I have been a player? Nor is my case by any means singular, for I have known many as destitute as myself." He then turned to his wife, and said,

"Come, Kate, cheer up, my girl! it's too late to grieve: d—n it, shew more philosophy; we may see more lively days, and perhaps bless the hour that I became a soldier."

Finding that he had actually inlisted, I deemed it folly to comment on the step he had taken, but gave my attention to Mrs. Burrows, and attempted to meliorate the affliction which could not then be hush'd.

At my request, we all retired into the public-house, where Burrows, his wife,

wife, his two children, the serjeant, and myself, were accommodated with a private room. I immediately went for Caroline, who I had left in a shop at a small distance from the scene of action.

She no sooner saw Mrs. Burrows, and learnt her fate, than her tears flowed as fast as those of the object for whom she wept.

We remained drinking and chatting till we were surprized by the appearance of Mr. Frank.

" I hear," said he, " that you are inlisted: is it really so?"

" Ah! Mr. Frank," cried Burrows, starting up, " you are come to censure me, and demand your rights. I'm afraid my case looks rather ungrateful; but

but it can't be helped: I could not live and see my family starve. I might have remained in your company till doomsday, before I could refund the four guineas I owe you; but if I forget it, may God forget me. I don't say when; I make no false promises; but once more I say, I'll not forget you." To which Mr. Frank returned:

"My friend Burrows, you was never cut out for an actor, since you read mankind so ill. So you really think I am come to demand that money from you? No, d—n it; let it be forgotten. I only wish it was in your pocket now. But what signifies wishing impossibilities to serve a friend in distress, when we have the power of shewing our regard by natural means? Here, my buck, I am not fond of doing this in public, but I may not see you any more—here's two guineas for your poor

wife, to buy necessaries with, and God provide for you in future."

Burrows took the money, and deposited it in the hands of his consort, who was unable to thank the generous donor. He then resumed his posture, and pronounced, in a smothered accent,

"I'll thank you for this some future day;" then put his hand to his eyes, in order to screen them from observation.

Mr. Frank having kissed the children, pressed the hands of Burrows and his wife, and bade them a friendly farewell.

He was no sooner gone, than the serjeant broke out into raptures at his generosity, and drank a bumper to his health; and when I ordered the landlord

to bring in his reckoning, this hero of the halberd insisted on paying the whole; and it was with considerable difficulty that I obtained his permission to contribute half. Such is the effect of a good example.

It was dark before we parted, and I rejoiced on perceiving the sorrow of Mrs. Burrows considerably abated; which happy effect was produced by the excellent character the serjeant gave of the colonel who commanded his regiment.

Here let me inform the reader, who may possibly feel himself interested in so worthy a family, that some years afterwards I had the happiness of seeing them, when Burrows, by his respectful and manly conduct, had been promoted to the rank of quarter-master; in which station he was enabled to maintain himself and family in credit and respectability.

Burrows was one of the unhappy many, who from his own infatuation, and the injudicious praises of his friends, had been led to forsake a good business, and starve amidst the unsubstantial honours of the stage.

CHAP. IV.

WE continued to play in this town with tolerable success. I, in general taking the lead in tragedy, and Caroline in polite comedy, which was certainly her proper sphere; and I had the gratification of perceiving her merits enlarge at each successive performance; when one evening, the curtain having dropped for the night, Mr. Frank summoned every individual to his own room, and addressed us thus:

"My dear friends, I have prepared for you, to-morrow evening, a humble supper, at the Rose and Crown, at which I beg the honour to preside; and I entreat every person of the theatre to attend,

attend, as the occasion of it is of the utmost importance to yourselves, as well as me; therefore, till we meet, God bless you." He then bowed, and left us to wonder at the nature of his proposal.

After a number of curious conjectures, we severally took our leaves, each of us anxious for the event of the following night.

Caroline and myself puzzled our poor brains at a lamentable rate, concerning the intentions of Mr. Frank.

"What," said she, "can he have to communicate of such vast importance, unless he means to change the state of his affairs:—he certainly means to pursue some new line."

"Perhaps," answered I, "he means to

to commence puppet-show man. If so, Caroline, you will stand a chance of being made an accomplished wire-dancer, and be called upon to entertain your audience with a hornpipe in breeches.

At length the time arrived when our wearied imaginations were to rest; and at nine o'clock the following evening we found ourselves seated in the midst of our friends, around a table graced with a plain, but plentiful fare, consisting of boiled leg of mutton with caper sauce, and an apple-pye. This might be a contemptible entertainment for a London citizen, but to a company of itinerant players it was a most sumptuous feast.

At the head of the table sat Frank, his countenance full of good-nature, yet marked, as I thought, with friendly concern

concern and embarrassment. On his right hand was his lady, full of that officious zeal, which is ever found in good-nature unacquainted with the etiquette of polite behaviour.

Frank desired we would make ourselves merry over his poor treat, and and excuse his explanation till after we had supped. All eyes were immediately averted from him to the table, while every tongue uttered, "O by all means, Sir," and prepared to do its part.

Our meal was no sooner finished, and the cloth removed, than Mr. Frank bid every one charge their glass, and drink, with him, *Success to the Stage*; which request was no sooner complied with, than he rose, and unburthened himself as follows:

"My friends, I must beg leave, in the

the first place, to say, that this is the most arduous, the most painful task, I ever underwent in my life.—I have often shed tears on parting from one friend; what then must I feel at parting with so many?—for part we must.—My father is just dead—he has left me a paternal estate of eighty pounds a year, on which I hope to live comfortably all the rest of my life.—I have long been weary of my situation as a manager, and have long wished for the happy opportunity of quitting a station so little adapted to my abilities, or my nature.—My nature! I repeat, my friends—for it is against my nature, to behold so many worthy objects in a continued state of distress, from which I could never relieve them without beggaring myself.

"In the mean time, I hope you will have no cause to complain of my conduct; for though I have near three

weeks

weeks to complete my license in this town, I will seek no farther profits for myself, but devote each night to your mutual advantage, toward which I shall use my utmost zeal. I would, therefore, have you select those plays which you think will best suit the temper of the people and your own emolument; and, as far as my poor recommendation will go towards your future engagements at other theatres, you may command them. You have now seven nights of performance good; at the end of which, I shall sell my materials to a brother manager, who will shortly be here to value them. His rounds are more advantageous than mine, and possibly some of you may chance to please him; if so, it will be fortunate, should he engage you. So Heaven send you success, and let us spend the evening as merrily as we can."

Having finished, he resumed his seat, and for a few seconds a profound silence remained, which Mr. Case broke in upon as follows:

"I don't know how to take this affair, d—n me if I do. You have brought your ship safe into port, as the saying is, and now, d—n me, you are going to turn your crew adrift, to shift for themselves in the rough sea of adversity." So saying, he cast round upon the company a look of important regard; expecting, no doubt, a universal approbation of his patriotism.

A short interval having elapsed, Mr. Fenwick addressed him in these terms:

"I am really astonished, Mr. Case, after having heard the liberal proposals of Mr. Frank, and the cogent reasons he has assigned for his proceeding, to hear

hear such sentiments issue from your lips. But surely you cannot have understood him, or you would, certainly, have thought and spoken differently. In what manner has his crew, as you are pleased to style us, brought him into port? it is not to us he owes his independence; but to his own inheritance; and how can you, in justice, say that he sets us adrift on the sea of adversity, when he furnishes us with the means of conveyance to future engagements.—If any of us should meet a harder fortune, it would be unjust to ascribe it to him, who has acted in so liberal a manner. Here are seven nights of performance for us, and it is certainly fair, that the humblest individual should share his kindness with the rest: since, therefore, there is no time to be lost, let us immediately apply to business, and mix it with the pleasures of the night, by selecting such

pieces as we may deem will draw the best houses."

"What, what!" cried Case, with great energy—"What, all to share alike? I'll be d—d if I submit to any such system: what, is the candle-snuffer to meet with the same advantage and respect as the principal performers? No, I would not bend to it if you'd kiss my ——." Saying this, he turned about his chair, and began drumming upon its back, in order to keep up his spirits. Seeing no one attempt to answer, I rose, and said,

"You have now learnt, ladies and gentlemen, how much you ought to rely on the public spirit which Mr. Case has just manifested. Who would not have thought that his heart teemed with the most exalted sensations for our joint welfare? Who but would have judged,

judged, that he beheld our hapless lot with the most brotherly affection, and that he would have shared his last morsel with the most destitute of us? But how has he betrayed himself? for the moment he learns that all are alike to partake the bounty of our friend, he starts into a passion, and wonders at the degradation his high merit sustains, on being insulted with a common share. So much for his philanthropy! I beg leave to conclude by observing, that I perfectly acquiesce in the opinion of Mr. Fenwick, that Mr. Frank has acted upon this occasion in the most honourable and brotherly manner."

When I concluded, every voice in the room, except Case's, joined in approving the conduct of Mr. Frank; and, loudly expressing their gratitude, drank to his future welfare.

 Case,

Case, whether from shame, or secret pride, I cannot tell, secluded himself from the rest, and calling for a glass of liquor, which he paid for, disdained the social converse of all present. I observed to him, that it was necessary he should inform us, whether or not he meant to play, that we might arrange the characters accordingly; to which he replied, that he would perform for his stipulated salary, and accept of no *humbug* shares. This, in order to prevent any interruption, we thought proper to abide by, and instantly proposed *Macbeth*, with a favourite pantomime, for the first night.

We continued enjoying the treat of our friend till two o'clock on the following morning, when we parted in harmony, and adjourned to our separate homes.

We had scarcely seated ourselves to breakfast next day, when Mr. Frank joined us, and after thanking me for my conduct on the preceding evening, informed us, that he had not the least doubt but the gentleman who was to purchase his scenery, &c. would engage Caroline and myself, as he had observed to him, in his letter, that he should pick out some of his best performers. I thanked him, and said I would wait the event.

In the mean time, we prepared for business. Mr. Fenwick deemed it expedient to have a number of hand-bills for distribution, stating the situation of our company, and soliciting the patronage of the town's-people.

This was accordingly put in execution, and Mr. Frank, Fenwick, and myself, waited personally on some of the

the first families, to whom we explained the story, and vouched for its truth. By some we were kindly received, with promises of their support; while others only laughed at us, believing it nothing but a mere strolling trick of our own invention.

I could not help comparing the different reception I met with in this town from that I received in the first: there I was welcomed in almost every house with open arms—here I was received with a reserve that strongly bordered on suspicion.

I accounted for it thus—At the first place the theatre had been of long establishment, and the performers being known, were hailed as old acquaintance; but here the stage was entirely new, and our company being all strangers, and many of them cutting a most woeful

ful appearance, were looked upon only as a superior kind of beggars, that required some watching.

The night of performance arrived, and the play went off with good spirit. I was the *Macbeth*; Mr. Fenwick, *Banquo*; Case, *Macduff*; and Caroline, the *heroine*.

The audience was but thin; however, the clear profits amounted to five pounds eight. Our next night produced a trifle more; but on the third, there were not twenty people in the house; notwithstanding which, we finished the performance, and gave out another.

On leaving the theatre, we soon learnt, that the cause of our empty benches proceeded from a general consternation produced by a fire, in which

a poor old man, who from the infirmities of age could not escape the flames, was burnt to death.

It is impossible to describe the melancholy effect this accident had upon the inhabitants of the town; each of whom bore on his countenance as much concern as if he had lost a dear relation. Nothing was heard but lamentations for the unhappy sufferer. My regret was double; for while I sympathized with those around me, my concern was augmented for the situation of my immediate friends, against whose interest, I dreaded this incident would act as a paralytic stroke; and on the following night my fears were realized, the audience being less than the preceding.

At the close of the curtain we held a consultation, and considered whether or not we should open the house any more;

more; when, after some discussion, it was agreed that we should proceed. Accordingly we gave out the *Suspicious Husband*; and when the night arrived, thought our perseverance amply rewarded, on sharing eleven shillings each. Our hopes enlarged upon this, and on the following performance, which was the *Merry Wives of Windsor*, we shared nine shillings separately. The last night was now at hand: the play was *Venice Preserv'd*; and to our great satisfaction, our individual shares amounted to fourteen shillings.

Mr. Frank, before we left the theatre, recommended our early attendance next morning, when he would introduce Mr. Bantom to us (the gentleman who was to purchase his properties); by whom he hoped to see some of us engaged.

Caroline and myself retired home, and waited impatiently for the minute when we were to see manager Bantom; in case of whose refusal, it was our intention to write immediately to the proprietor of some respectable company.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

BY the hour of eleven on the following day, we were at the theatre.

The first object that caught my eyes was Mr. Bantom, busily employed in tumbling over the scenery, &c. which lay scattered about the stage in sad confusion. At his side was Mr. Frank; while the poor Children of Thespis stood in a mournful circle, viewing with concern the dissolution of their empire.

After a short silence, occasioned by our sudden entrance, Mr. Frank resumed his subject, with,

"Well, Sir, since it is not my wish to

to make a profit of the sale, and as I have no time to lose, you must even take them at your own price ;" to which Mr. Bantom answered,

"Why, d—n me, Frank, you know I wou'dn't *take you in* ; but I'll be judged by this lady, taking the hand of Caroline, whether forty pounds isn't a d—d wapping sum for cast-off trammels, worn-out suns and moons, burnt rivers, canvas forests, and thunder and lightning ten years old ? Ha ! what say you to it, my dear ?"

Caroline replied, that the value of many things depended on their antiquity ; consequently, age could be no detriment.

"Well said, my girl," cried Mr. Bantom ; "and since you are fond of antiquity, what say you to a tough old

cock

cock like myself? Ha, d—n me, you can't reject your own opinion. Ha! ha! ha!"

"But," replied Caroline again, "every part must be in unison; an old coin newly burnished would lose its estimation, and an old gentleman, unless he possesses the dignity which age should carry, loses his respect."

"True, my dear, true," returned he; and addressed himself to Mr. Frank, with, "Well, my boy, the bargain is struck and concluded; so here's the *mopusses*;" on which he produced the money, and immediately calling in two porters, the goods soon disappeared.

The bustle was no sooner over than Mr. Frank observed to him, that there were some of his friends would be happy

happy to inlist under his banners, if he stood in need of their services. Upon which Bantom turned about, and with an important look, replied:

"True, true, I do want a useful hand or two; but by my chalked stockings and paper ruffles, here's so many of ye, that I don't know who to nose first. However, let me know what ye can do; let me have a specimen." With that, he surveyed every individual's face by turns.

The company remained looking first on him, and at each other, as if inviting some one else to begin, till Mr. Frank, perceiving our situation, recommended Mr. Fenwick, as the oldest subject, to commence; on which the latter, without the least hesitation, advanced, and went through the soliloquy of *Hamlet*—"*To be, or not to be.*"

He

He had no sooner finished, than he addressed himself to Mr. Bantom, demanding whether that was not sufficient for him to determine on his merits?

"Merits!" exclaimed the latter, "Why, d—n me, Sir, you've no action!—Its no use your standing stock still upon the boards, and muttering a *hodge-podge* speech, without moving your stumps?—You han't got the right idea of acting, Sir—Elocution! poh! d—n me, elocution's the least part in an actor!—the walk's the thing, Sir—I can tell a man by his walk.—I know what he can do the first step I see him take!"—So saying, he strutted twice or thrice across the stage, in the most unnatural manner possible, which drew a stifled laugh from most of the parties present, and from Mr. Fenwick a loud one.

I could not but admire the figure before me: his height did not exceed five feet; his eyes were light grey, and of a size that surpassed such as come under the denomination of *goggle*; his nose was prominent, but unseemly, being extremely carbuncled; his underlip projected full half an inch beyond the upper one, while a very prominent belly and bandy legs, finished the *contour* of this curious Manager. In short, he might very well have been taken for a native of *Terra del Fuego*, of whom travellers relate such rare accomplishments, and whom philosophers define—a link in the chain of creation—which seems to separate the man from the brute.

When he had sufficiently gratified himself with his "wooden dialogue of the scaffolding," he turned to Case, and desired him to stand forth.

Case,

Case, whose pride it had ever been to triumph over Mr. Fenwick (but in which, by the bye, he always came short), hoped to gain Bantom's approbation by a method diametrically opposite to that of the former. Accordingly he began bellowing forth a speech from *Zanga*, in the *Revénge*; and although he did it like *one of Nature's journeymen*, failed not to excite the loudest approbation of the Manager, who engaged him immediately at fifteen shillings a week, at the same time exclaiming—

"Aye, that's acting! d—n me, that's what I like!—there's something like life about you."

The next person he engaged was a Mrs. Brown, whose sphere was low comedy, and who was so fortunate as to catch his good opinion by a coarseness of

of style, that would have led any one to conclude she had drawn her characters from Billingsgate.

He next turned to Caroline, and with wonderous politeness, requested a specimen. A look from her, seemed to ask my advice, on which I bid her go through a scene from *Romeo* with me.

We had not gone half way, before he interrupted us with

" Stop, stop!—there's enough, by my rusty foils—there's plenty!—You'll do, Ma'am, you'll do to admiration, and if you'll accept fifteen shillings a week, they're at your service."

Caroline demanded " if he had nothing to say for the gentleman who played *Romeo* to her *Juliet*?"

" O!

"O! no, no, no—my dear Ma'am, he'll never answer my purpose.—I like to be blunt, so, d—n me, I don't think I should ever be able to make any thing of him."

"Then, Sir," replied she, "it is necessary to inform you, that he is my husband; consequently, we are inseparable."

"Consequently!" returned he; "not at all *consequently*—why, don't you know that players couple like birds in the spring, and part again in autumn?—Why, there's a friend of mine at Edinburgh, who don't see his wife above once in every leap-year: he plays in the north, she in the south; and yet, when they meet, they are as happy as turtle doves.—So you can't part, ha? Well, well, for your sake, I'll give him ten shillings a week—can't sepa-

rate—

rate—ha, ha, ha! Well, I wish you may always be so loving. What think you of me, now? I've left my wife behind me to manage matters, though I'm for ever hearing stories to her prejudice; but I don't believe 'em; nor am I in the least afraid of my honour."

"I hope not, Sir," said Caroline; "you are, no doubt, conscious of your own integrity, and your lady's virtue."

"Ha, ha! well said, *Juliet*," cried he—"but what say you to my proposal? I'll give twenty-five shillings between you, and a joint benefit at the next town we move to; but I won't give a farthing more.—I can't afford it."

Deeming it more eligible to accept his offer than to wait the chance of a better, we immediately came to an agreement.

Mr.

Mr. Bantom had certainly some reason for estimating my powers at so low a standard, as I recited the part of *Romeo* in a very inanimated manner. I was, at the moment, quite spirit-broken, on beholding so many features of distress as then surrounded me: each anxiously endeavouring to catch the notice of Bantom. They looked like the children of Famine, claiming the commiseration of Plenty; if so fair an appellation might be given to the Manager, who chose one more from the group, and left the rest to starve.

He then, first desiring us to meet him at his theatre on the evening of the following day, and taking leave of Mr. Frank, left every one to shift for themselves.

We had now no more to do than take leave of our friends, and prepare for our journey.

journey. The first I instantly put in execution, by shaking them severally by the hand, and wishing them a happier fortune; Caroline doing the same, with tears in her eyes.

On leaving the theatre, Mr. Frank gave us a brotherly parting, and begged that we would call upon his wife on our way home.

Accordingly we proceeded to his lodgings, where we found Mrs. Frank busily employed in packing up a parcel, which, she had no sooner finished, than she presented to us; saying, it consisted of some stage trifles which might prove of use. She then pressed us to stay and dine with her; but on our assurance that we could not accept her kindness, from the little time we had to spare, she, giving Caroline a kiss, took leave as follows:

"My

" My dear Mrs. Templeton, I don't know how it is, but I loved you from the first moment I saw you, as tho' you had been my own born child, and I'm sure I always shall. Heaven alone knows whether we shall ever meet again; so, in remembrance of me, keep this for my sake, and God and all his angels bless and guard you both;" on which she presented her with a handsome red Morocco pocket-book.

We then, bidding a farewell to that good woman, hastened to our lodgings, and packed up for our departure.

The present of Mrs. Frank we found to consist of two very splendid robes, three or four pair of shoes richly spangled, some zones of different coloured grounds and highly ornamented, with a variety of feathers; the whole, in value, amounting to at least six or eight

 guineas.

guineas. This was not all, for on opening the pocket-book, we discovered two guineas inclosed in a note, apologizing for the manner of presenting them. Such was the affection of this friendly woman, and such her manner of expressing it.

In the afternoon we were joined by Mr. Fenwick, who informed us of an action which reflected much honour upon Mr. Frank.

"You had no sooner left the theatre," said he, "than he invited us all to a public-house, where he had previously prepared a dinner, to which we sat down. That concluded, he ordered in a liberal quantity of punch; then, taking out his purse, distributed twenty guineas amongst our poor friends, giving the females a double share. After which, he bade them a farewell, and hurried out of the room."

" It was to shelter his feelings from the storm of gratitude," cried I, in raptures at his benevolence.

During our conversation, I took an opportunity of asking Mr. Fenwick, whether he stood in need of any pecuniary assistance, offering to share my little remains with him ; but he assured me, that he had refused the generosity of Mr. Frank, on account of his being above want, having an aunt who occasionally supplied him with sums of money.

I had a sincere esteem for this worthy young man, and was rejoiced on hearing that he ran no danger of suffering from Poverty, amongst whose meagre, pallid race, so many of his profession exist.

We now began to talk upon the readiest way of travelling to our destined situ-

situation, when we were interrupted by Mrs. Brown, the lady engaged by Mr. Bantom with us, who came in laughing, and demanding, whether we would accompany her in the waggon that was to pass through the town at eleven o'clock, and would arrive at the place we were going to, by three or four in the morning. For her part, she said she was determined to proceed in that manner, having before experienced the comforts and conveniencies of that machine.

We at first laughed at the proposal, but on farther consideration, thought it by no means objectionable; for, in the first place, we might sleep at our ease under a warm covering; in the second, our boxes would be under our immediate care; and, in the third, it would be by much the cheapest carriage we could procure. Accordingly, we agreed to repair in good time to the inn at

which the waggon would halt, and there wait its arrival.

As the evening had commenced, we forwarded our trunks immediately; which done, Mrs. Brown joining us, we remained to spend the time as agreeably as possible till ten o'clock, when we rose, and attended by Mr. Fenwick, our landlady, and her son, posted to the place of parting.

We had not remained a quarter of an hour in the parlour of the inn, before the latter, with great agitation, whispered in my ear that he wished to speak with me; on which I took an opportunity of going out, and was quickly followed by him.

We were no sooner in the yard, and secure from observation, than he accosted me thus:

 "Mr.

"Mr. Templeton, do not, pray do not be offended with me, nor refuse the favour I am going to ask."

The boy spoke with so much earnestness, accompanied with such a tremor, that my astonishment was as much excited as my curiosity; and bidding him speak, he proceeded as follows:

"I like you as if you was my brother; I love Mrs. Templeton better than I should my sister—O! better than all the world. Do not let me stay behind then; do not leave me forever; but take me with you, and teach me to be a player. I know I shall soon learn, and then I shall be happy. I will travel with you all over the world, and be as true to you as your own son. I would rather be a *player* than a *prince!* I can be nothing but a *player*: I would give my life to be a *player*."

His

His spirits, during the above speech, underwent a regular gradation, from the lowest accent of despondency to the highest pitch of animated hope; and when he came to the emphatic rhapsody—*I would give my life to be a player!* any one would have imagined the sentence had issued from the lips of a young Alexander; so much did he seem to rise above the fear of a negative.

My time was so short, that I was apprehensive of not being able to muster sufficient arguments in the interval, to dissuade him from his rash intention; or, rather, I doubted that the share of skill I possessed, was not competent to the task of curing his young mind of its new, but powerful disease. However, I commenced by informing him of the disappointments I had sustained, with respect to the pleasures of the profession; the distresses I had experienced,

 with

with the prospect of new ones; and concluded by setting in so strong a light the injustice and cruelty which such a conduct would prove to his mother, that he seemed to relent by degrees; till at last bursting into tears, and seizing my hand, he confessed his error, and hoped never to fall into the like again.

"But I do so love you both," said he, sobbing, "that I shall never be happy after you have left me."

"While you remain dutiful to your parent, George," said I, "our regard for you will equal yours for us; but if that should cease, as it certainly would, were you to desert her, our regard would change into abhorrence. But come, I know you better than to believe you guilty of it."

"You

"You will not tell my mother?" demanded he.

"Since you have acted so nobly," returned I, "I will not abuse your confidence." We then immediately joined our company.

We remained talking, till the arrival of the waggon put an end to our conversation; when, taking a kind farewell of our friends, we mounted by a ladder into this spacious conveyance.

Mrs. Brown, in groping out a situation, stumbled over a Scotch drover, who was on his return, after disposing of his cattle: her weight happening to disturb his repose, he turned round, grumbled out a harmless ejaculation, and fell asleep again.

I had seated myself between Mrs. Brown

Brown and Caroline, having thrown over our shoulders a large watch-coat which I had lately purchased. In this manner, with our backs reclining against some soft bags, we were perfectly at ease. We were about to start, when my landlady presenting us with a bottle of rum, a tin cup, and some cakes, insisted upon our acceptance of them. Another shake of the hand, with a last farewell, passed, and we felt the waggon moving on its way.

CHAP. VI.

THE night was keen, yet fine. The moon shining in her fullest lustre, glimmered through the opening of the tilt at the back of our humble carriage, sufficiently to shew the lowly picture that we formed, while the tingling of the team, and a mournful love-ditty with which the waggoner was amusing himself finished this slowly-moving scene.

When we had travelled about two miles, I produced the rum bottle; and, first giving the waggoner a cupful, recommended the same to ourselves. Caroline refused, but Mrs. Brown was unacquainted with any such silly objections, and freely drank her share. I

then begged her to jog the Scotchman, and offer him a part. My commission met her approbation; but her mode of executing it by far exceeded my wishes; for instead of a gentle touch upon his shoulder, she struck him so unconscionable a blow upon his naked thigh, that the sound resembled the report of a pistol.

Now, lest the reader should be led to imagine strange things by my expression, *naked thigh*, I must beg leave to explain, that our northern companion was dressed in the Highland garb, and that part of his apparel which covered his breech, consisting of a philibeg, or short petticoat, might very readily be supposed to admit the gentle hand of our lady to come in contact with his flesh.

He instantly started up, and in the broadest accent exclaimed,

"What

"What the de'el do ye want, ye thristless mook? Canna a body tak his natral rest for ye? Gang to Satan, and sweet in purgatory for your muschief!"

To this Mrs. Brown returned a loud laugh; but I, fearing farther to irritate the offended pride of Scotland, observed, that the lady, so far from wishing to disturb him, had nothing but his good at heart, having awakened him only for the purpose of requesting him to share a bottle of rum with us; at the same time I presented a cupful.

The Mountaineer perceiving my earnestness, and accepting my proffer, accosted her with,

"Aw faire lassey, I trust ye wull forgive the hairshness of my speech, for when a mon's asleep, ye ken as wull as me, that he canna answer for his conduct;

conduct; and by my troth, I was vara far from being awak when I spok: but to let ye see that I bare no malace, here's wushing ye gude health, and muckle faire in this warld, with God's grace i'the next."—So saying, he drank off the liquor without the least hesitation; then returning me the cup, confessed his happiness in being amongst sic wull behaved gentry.

Mrs. Brown being at the very top of jocularity, began relating some of the most curious incidents of her life: but her spirits being too much upon the wing, and taking too large a flight, soon sunk beneath the weight of oppressed nature, and she fell sound asleep in the midst of her first story. Caroline soon after, reclining her head upon my shoulder, followed her example, and in a few minutes more, we were all entranced in the charms of *Morpheus*.

We

We slept undisturbed till about four in the morning, when our ears were assailed by various and confused outcries; amongst which I could distinctly hear the following:

"Help! O, mercy!—help! O, murder!—we are innocent people who have neither meant, or done harm to any living upon earth!—for Ch—t's sake help!"—while another still louder than the above, roared out,

"Don't believe 'em, Jack!—don't spare it! d—n me, my boy, don't believe 'em! they are the enemy in disguise!—down with 'em, down—O!"

This last ejaculation of "O!" seemed to indicate a sudden check to its author; but, before I could ascertain that opinion, the following accent of distress, uttered in a shrill voice, caught my attention:

"O! father, father, help me!—I am overpowered—I shall be murdered—help, O father!"

I instantly grasped an oaken stick, fit for the purpose of defence, and leaping from the struggles of Caroline, who attempted to detain me, was quickly in the midst of the tumult, and with pleasure saw the North Briton follow me, brandishing a trusty crab-staff in his hand.

The moon not having yet forsook her station in the heavens, afforded us sufficient light to behold the strange scene that presented itself.

The first objects I beheld, were six or seven dismal looking wretches, busied in dispatching a poor being, who lay exhausted beneath their rage. One fiend in particular, had fastened

upon

upon his throat, and, like his Fate, was ending his existence. On him I let loose my vengeance, and by a single blow, felled him to the ground. Perceiving two others fall at the same instant, and the rest disperse, my confidence rose superior to every fear. I then bent down to observe the state of the hapless sufferer, who, but for my timely assistance, would in a few seconds, have been beyond the art of *Esculapius*. I unbuttoned his shirt-collar, and after rubbing his breast a few seconds, found signs of re-animation. At this moment, seeing Caroline, whose fears for my safety had brought her into the midst of danger, I left the poor gentleman to her care, and turned to survey the objects around me, when, to my astonishment, amongst the number of creatures I beheld, I could not discern one perfect being, nor could I scarcely believe them to be human;

human; some wanting legs, others without arms, while the rest had bandages, either on their heads, or on some part of the body; the whole bespeaking the most wretched condition that human nature could display: they looked as if they had issued from an infirmary at the approach of Death; or rather, they appeared so many Deaths, broke loose amongst mankind.

The brave and generous Scotchman had been battling in the rescue of another discomfited hero, whom we afterwards found to be a son of the one I had saved, while the waggoner laid about him at such an unmerciful rate, that the miserable crew lay strewed upon the road in sad dismay.

My northern friend perceiving peace established, brought forth his redeemed man, who was about sixteen years of

age,

age, and demanded how we all fared? But before I had time to answer him, the youth, fixing a woeful look upon his parent, exclaimed,

"Ah! father, father! This is all your own work—you will one day bring me to death, by your headstrong folly and madness: what the devil had we to do with such enemies as these, when we were sleeping soundly in our beds? —at least it was so with me.—But you are not hurt, are you, father?" He then examined his features more closely, and perceiving them besmeared in some parts with blood, broke out into the most heartfelt lamentations.

To this tender expostulation, the sire, who was now risen upon his breech, exclaimed, with a look expressive of indescribable contempt;

"Away,

"Away, thou pigmy!—thou scabbard without a sword!—thou poor toad of a stinking ditch!—hence, and sweat away thy giant fears in the turbid stream of muddy styx, nor let my warlike soul be troubled with thee more!—the time will come when thou shalt see my greatness!—when thou shalt see the corporation, headed by the Mayor, return me their humble thanks, for my thus delivering them from this wild herd of plunderers, at near the expence of my life."

From the above sample, you, reader, will, no doubt, perceive as readily as we did, the insanity of the unfortunate gentleman. However, the waggoner, whose apprehension was not so quick as ours, saw it not so clearly; but taking all he heard for gospel, strongly urged our securing the supposed offenders, and conveying them to the first justice at

hand.

hand. This he was about to put in force, by seizing the first object near him, who lay upon the road, unable to walk, from having broken his wooden-leg, and being sorely oppressed with wounds, when the poor wretch, full of terror, exclaimed,

" For God's sake, gentlemen, have pity on our condition, nor suffer yourselves to be carried away by false appearances; but listen to our story, and I am sure you'll be more inclined to assist than molest us! You must know, gentlemen, that we are a number of poor, innocent, and harmless people, who get our daily bread by asking charity of all good Christians; and to-morrow being market-day at the town behind us, we, according to our custom, assembled in the open shambles of the market-place last night, to wait the approach of the following day. There we lay, some

sleeping, and others chatting away the time, till we were disturbed by the approach of two men, armed in a strange manner; the one with a rusty fowling-piece, the other with an old hanger.— We could not guess their intention, but were greatly alarmed on hearing one whisper to the other, that we were the enemy lying in ambush, and in disguise, at the same time bidding him charge, and rushing upon us with his gun, began to belabour our poor carcasses at a cruel rate, while the youngest, following his example, kept pricking us up with the point of his sword, and goading us like so many bullocks. Upon which, being unable to resist them, we who could, took to our stumps and crutches, hoping to escape our dangerous annoyers. But we were mistaken, for they continued following us to this spot, tumbling us down, and then thumping us up again, till, at

last,

last, driven to desperation, some of us mustering together, turned upon our foes, and overpowered them; and, perhaps, in the height of our revenge, might have done them a mischief, had you not luckily come to their rescue; though, the Lord knows, we have not much occasion to rejoice, for some of us have got wounds in the affair, which we shall feel till doomsday. So you see, gentlemen, that we have the greatest reason to complain, and call out for justice; and, if I was not certain of their being mad, I would have them brought to trial."

The poor fellow delivered this in a style much above his condition. For my own part, I began to compassionate the unhappy company from my heart, and promised to lend them all the assistance in my power.

I accordingly requested permission of the waggoner to let them ride; which, with some reluctance, was complied with, and we instantly set about placing them as conveniently as possible in the waggon; but none seemed more to demand our care than the second QUIXOTE, whom we placed upon some straw, under the immediate charge of his son.

They were no sooner seated in order, than I searched for the remainder of my rum, which I meant to have distributed amongst the greatest sufferers; but it was not to be found, till by a very minute examination, we discovered the bottle between the legs of Mrs. Brown, who remained snoring in the midst of all the tumult. I instantly caught it up, and was proceeding to draw the cork, when, alas! there was no cork to draw; the only fluid which

which the bottle contained being air. I looked upon Mrs. Brown, and smiled, while the beggars grinned at her, and groaned.

Things being thus adjusted, we proceeded on our way; Caroline, the Scotchman, and myself, walking before the waggon, and in less than an hour reached the town.

The waggon no sooner stopped at the inn, than the unfortunate gentleman was conveyed to bed, having first washed his bruises; then helping the beggars to descend from the waggon, we all assembled round the kitchen fire, Mrs. Brown, who had awakened in the bustle, being of the number.

Happily, none of the unfortunate cripples were materially hurt, except the one I had knocked down, who had

received a deep contusion on his head, from which the blood trickled, so as to give him a horrid appearance. Having first carefully washed his sore, I bound it up, and presented him with five shillings, which he merrily observed, was the best salve I could have given him.

The Scotchman having called for whiskey, the beggars for ale, Mrs. Brown, Caroline, and myself, for tea, and being calmly adjusted, I requested the young gentleman, who had left his father to repose, would explain the event which had given such disturbance to us all. The youth blushed, and obeyed me thus:

"It is a painful task, Sir, for a son to dwell upon the misfortunes of his father, but you have so strong a claim upon me, that I can deny you nothing. My parent is neither more or less than mad,

mad, though, from his long intervals of sanity, it is not deemed necessary to confine him. The physicians thinking that nothing would tend so much to his recovery as a calm uninterrupted life, have forbidden us, upon all occasions, to cross his will; in consequence of which, my brother and myself have, from our infancy, been taught to pay him implicit obedience; while my mother, full of tenderness for his situation, preaches to us daily the duty of children to their parents. But his commands are at times so preposterous, that we are inclined to fly from the severity of our task, and should, did not our affection with stronger persuasion retain us. At times, he insists upon our sitting up with him for several nights together, in making observations on the planetary system, although, perhaps, there is not a star to be seen. At others, we are obliged to rise from

our beds at midnight, and march with him round the town, to prevent being surprized by the enemy, of which he is in constant alarm. In these nocturnal rambles he frequently molests innocent people, imagining them to be spies; and, but for the interference of my brother and myself, his curiosity would prove fatal to him.

"It was in one of these last fits that he came to my chamber early this morning, and rousing me from a sound sleep, desired I would rise, and arm myself instantly, for that the enemy were surrounding our house.

"I was compelled to obey, as disobedience teemed with danger; and being drest, he presented me with an old hanger, and commanded me to follow him, he being armed with an uncharged fowling-piece.

"In

"In this manner we sallied into the garden, which he was astonished to find free from invasion; and turning to me, in an angry tone exclaimed,

"Thou man of sloth, this is thy doing; thou lazy drone, unfit for honour's task: but I will follow them to their camp; so march in order, dastard." Then issuing into the street, he proceeded to the market-place. There he paraded about some time, till at last he unfortunately espied these poor creatures sheltered under the shambles. Turning to me then with the most lively joy, he exclaimed,

"Now, Tom, if thou hast a mind to prove thyself worthy of thy father, follow my example, and fall upon the foe, who now lie lurking in vile and cowardly ambush." With that, he

made at, and presently put them to rout.

"For my own part, though I appeared extremely active, I took care to hurt none; but finding him resolved in his pursuit, kept as close to him as possible, in order to screen him from danger.

"We continued to follow them, until they, I imagine, urged by desperation and despair, made a sudden halt, and falling upon us in numbers, soon overpowered us; and, but for your timely assistance, we should have met a worse fate than we have, as my brother being from home, we were deprived of his succour.

"Such, Sir, is my father, who, in his moments of reason, displays one of the noblest hearts and enlightened understanding.

standing. For the injury these poor people have sustained, I will be answerable for his making them atonement; and, as an earnest, will myself defray the expences they may incur at this house for victuals and drink; therefore, good friends, make free in calling for what you please."

The youth here finished, and though his story ought rather to have excited sympathy, it produced a general and loud laugh, which lasted some minutes. At the conclusion, he turned to a servant of the house, who knew him, and paid him great respect, and desired she would furnish those people, pointing to the beggars, with whatever they called for; at the same time presenting a card of address to one of them, invited him and his companions to call at his house in the afternoon. Then addressing himself to us, and giving

his card also, hoped we would deem his family under an eternal obligation, and pressed us to visit him as early as possible. He then bowed, and went to attend his father.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

THE beggars now considering themselves as masters of the inn, began to verify the proverb, *Set them on horse-back*, &c.—bawling out for gin, brandy, bacon, eggs, and every article that suited their different palates, till at length they discovered such symptoms of disorder, as induced us to request a separate room, which was accordingly granted. The Scotchman shortly after, being under the necessity of hastening his journey, parted from us with professions of friendly regard.

Mrs. Brown had not yet revived from the stupefying powers of the rum, and it was in vain that we attempted to make her understand where she was,

and how she came thither. However, she was not wholly insensible to the temperature of her own constitution, for desiring the servant to lead her to bed, she bade us good day, observing, than an hour's comfortable nap would bring her round again.

We remained till about ten o'clock, when, seeing the mistress of the house descend from her bed-room, we acquainted her with our situation, and requested she would recommend us to a lodging. But this lady, instead of treating us with that gentleness which Christianity recommends towards strangers, no sooner learnt our profession, than she broke forth as follows:

"Out, you *vagabones!* out *rapscallions!* I know ye all too well, and curst be the day I ever set my precious eyes on any of your tribe; for I have lost

lost more by ye than I shall get by all the rest of the world put together! Recommend you to a lodging, ha!—recommend you to a horse-pond, or the cart's a—e, an be plagued to ye! Pay your reckoning, and be off."

"Unfeeling woman," exclaimed Caroline, glowing with indignation, "here is your money. Whatever ills have reached you, I am certain you must have deserved; for none but a person unprincipled and debased, could have behaved to strangers as you have done to us."

"Out, ma'am princess," returned the other;" none of your fine, *flurrigig tragified* speeches to me—I want none such."

I was about to reply to this last, when the servant came running, to in-

form her mistress that "the lady desired to have some coffee sent up to the bed-room."

This lady was no other than Mrs. Brown, whose profession being learnt, by the hasty inquiries of our hostess, she instantly hurried up stairs, with a full determination of giving her the same dialogue of civility as that which we had experienced, while we, from curiosity, together with a wish to assist our friend, in case of need, remained at the bar.

Our ears were presently amused by a conversation unparalleled of its kind. Though I do not remember to have read, either in ancient or modern rhetoricians, any precise rules whereby I might define the merits of that species of elocution; this, however, I can assure the reader, that if the orators above were

were not so harmonious as Cicero, they were to the full as energetic as Demosthenes. But in one respect they resembled both, namely, in the persuasive *force* of action, which our ears could plainly distinguish.

We continued in silent admiration some time, till the violent bustle of the disputants creating our alarm, we were proceeding up the staircase, when our progress was interrupted by a dreadful shriek, and the bodies of the two combatants rolling down together, locked in each other's embraces.

Having gained the floor, Mrs. Brown seemed to hold a decided superiority, being on the top of the other. Of this advantage she was fully sensible, and began to make the best use of it, by plying her hands and nails so busily upon the face of her antagonist, that the

the latter roared out for mercy and forgiveness.

We immediately tore the enraged daughter of *Thalia* from the object of her revenge, and pinioned her arms; but her tongue being too mighty for such controul, went on as follows:

"I'll teach you, you fat-a—s'd b—h, to let fly your foul tongue at a lady; I will, you *Falstaff's* wh—e!—what, you thought you'd got a *mountebank's widow* to deal with, did you!—I'll learn you to abuse my profession, and becall me, a respectable member; I will, you old *she-cow!*"

The poor dispirited landlady had received such severe bruises from her fall, and such scratches from the industrious fingers of Mrs. Brown, that in a faint, and humble tone, she ordered her

her people to carry her to bed; with which they instantly complied, leaving our Amazon mistress of the field, who now loudly exulting in her conquest, and swearing she would not pay a farthing reckoning, seized her band-box, and sallied in triumph from the inn.

I confess, that on finding no bones broken, I felt a secret satisfaction in the completion of Mrs. Brown's revenge, which, though vented in so boisterous a manner, was strictly just.

Leaving word in the yard, that I should send for my boxes, we followed her into the street, when she suggesting that as our business was to seek for lodgings, it was best to separate and take different roads, we accordingly parted.

" Ah, me!" sighed Caroline, " to what

what a life are we exposed !" and resumed her silence.

The appearance of the town pleased me much; the houses being well built, the streets spacious, and the inhabitants seemingly full of activity and business.

"See, Caroline," said I, "how unheedingly these children of industry pass us: the business of our lives is to amuse them: they are charmed at the mock pleasures of our evening scenes, but they feel not our sad contrast of returning day."

The heart of Caroline was full of the indignity she had experienced from the landlady: she sighed again, and still continued her silence.

Having proceeded up two streets, we perceived a decent public-house, and

and entering it, inquired the most probable part of the town to seek for lodgings. The person to whom we addressed ourselves proved to be the landlord, a respectable looking old man, who civilly informed us, that as we appeared strangers, if we would wait in the parlour, he would dispatch his servant to search round the neighbourhood for us. This we thankfully accepted, and demanded, whether it would be convenient for us to dine with him. Answering in the affirmative, he conducted us into a room where his wife sat at work, and who received us with the same marks of good-nature as her husband.—

In less than half an hour the girl came to inform us she had found a lodging; where we might have the convenience of a room to ourselves, and, if we chose, board with the landlady, who, she said

was a milk-woman. We immediately went with her to see them. The house was in a bye street, its appearance neat and cleanly, and the mistress of it fully answering to that description. She informed us, that she had no other family than a daughter, who was then absent, and that she managed to get a comfortable livelihood.

"I have enough," said she: "I am content, and I ask no more of Heaven."

"Then," answered Caroline, "thou art rich indeed!"

Well pleased with all we saw and heard, we immediately made an agreement for our board and lodging, and then returned to the public-house, where the day passed pleasantly away till five o'clock; when I went to the inn, and hiring a man to assist in carrying

carrying my boxes, proceeded to our new lodgings, where Caroline and the milk-woman, having prepared tea, waited my arrival.

Our meal finished, the landlady's daughter, a girl whose age did not exceed eleven, conducted us to the theatre.

It was in one of the most spacious streets in the town; adjoining to the market-place. Its external appearance, went but a little way to its recommendation; being built of brick, extremely old and dirty. It had formerly been the session-house of the town; but the inhabitants having, a few years preceding, erected a new one, it had since that time undergone, through the ingenuity of Mr. Bantom, a metamorphosis into its present state.

Seeing

Seeing no private door, we concluded that the box-lobby led behind the scenes, and accordingly proceeded up to it by a flight of steps. On asking for the Manager, an orange-woman undertook to conduct us to his room. Our ears, much sooner, learnt his presence, than our eyes; as the following sentence proclaimed him at hand:

"D—n my b—d, Sir, its a lie!—I tell you its a lie—a rascally lie!—My wife's as chaste as *Diana*, and Mr. Gross as much my friend, as *Castor* was to *Pollux*.—But d—n me, ye're all a pack of sneaking, backbiting, malicious, envious vagabonds, and I would not believe ye, if you were every man jack of you to down on your marrow-bones, and take your bible oaths on it!—So bundle about your business, and trouble me no more with your *fudge-pudge* hums, about kissing and feeling."

His

His tongue had scarcely stopped, before the poor officious *Argus* came stumbling from the room with so forcible an impetus, that having staggered three or four yards, he fell against the orange-woman, and rolled with her upon the floor; while the golden fruit lay scattered about, as if sensible of their liberty.

While Caroline and myself were employed in the charitable office of assisting up our conductress, we were espied by the Manager, who called us into his room, and immediately related the cause of what we had witnessed; which was, that the informer had seen, or pretended to have seen, some singular liberties used by a Mr. Gross, to the Manager's lady.

" But," concluded he, in a transport of confidence, " you shall see, if you

are any judge of physiognomy—you shall see whether the face of Mrs. Bantom is that of a wh—e!—The case is, d'ye mind, they are full of spite against my friend Gross, and try every thing in their power to rob him of my esteem; but, d—n me, I love him the better for it."

He had scarcely finished, before a lady and gentleman, dressed in character, made their entry. The latter, on perceiving us, bowed and retired, while the former, seating herfelf on a chair, remained, and surveyed us with great attention.

"There," said Mr. Bantom, withdrawing his eyes from the lady, and fixing them on me—"There, Sir!—what is your opinion, ha?—speak."

Abashed at his question, and yet obliged to reply, I answered,

"Sir,

"Sir, I think your confidence does justice to your understanding:" which oracle-like answer, that might be construed either way, he made no hesitation of interpreting to his own fancy, and seizing my hand, declared I was a sensible lad, though not cut out for a player. He then introduced us to Mrs. Bantom, for such the lady proved to be, informing her of the nature of his question to me, and the cause of my answer; at which she smiled, and addressed me thus:

"You seem surprized, Sir, but you must know that Mr. Gross, the gentleman who just retired, being possessed of my husband's friendship, is, in consequence, an object of envy to the whole company, who are either jealous of his merit or his interest, and are continually striving to ruin him, by inventing tales to his prejudice, which Mr. Bantom

Bantom hears with a proper contempt. For the joke's sake, Mr. Gross and myself affect an open regard, which serves to increase their malice; and there is scarcely a day passes, without our being diverted with some new discovery of our improper correspondence, as they are pleased to term it."

At that moment, a boy calling her to attend the business of the stage, she curtseyed, and withdrew.

Mrs. Bantom appeared to be about thirty years of age; she was tall, and elegantly shaped; her features small, and pretty; her eyes dark and vivacious, and the contour of her face displaying an archness and levity, that promised the freest dispensations of her favours, to any who had the happiness of exciting her esteem.

The Manager, after a little conversation, desired Caroline to perfect herself in the part of *Monimia*, and said he would talk to me before he went home. We then left him, and proceeded to the green-room.

We found it extremely commodious: in the middle was a large table, covered with green baize, around which were seated several performers, in familiar conversation. We presently discovered Mrs. Brown amongst them, who, the moment she saw me, rose and introduced us to the rest, with as much freedom as a twenty years acquaintance would have entitled.

They all, except one, received us with great indifference, and he seemed to contain more ceremony than a court attendant. His figure first caught my observation, being about four feet eight inches

inches high; very fat and round; his face plump; his nose broad, his eyes extremely small, and shaded by a brow, the most arched I had ever seen.

This curious figure, rising from his seat, and bowing to the ground, while his features were rendered more striking by grimace, accosted us in these terms:

"Children, highly favoured of Apollo, suffer me, the humblest of his offspring, to introduce you to the darlings of his train. First, for my poor self, remember to call me Mason—Joey Mason." He then, in rotation, pointed to every individual present, and calling their names aloud, informed me of their different merits. His oration finished, of which, by the bye, spite of the buffoonery with which he attempted to veil it, he seemed not a little proud, he again bowed, and leading us to two

vacant

vacant seats, left us to admire his impudence.

We soon fell into conversation with those about us; but I found no one possessed so copious a share of words as Mr. Mason, whom I was rather surprized to observe still support the same mode as that which he had displayed to us.

After a farther acquaintance, I found him to be naturally a weak man, yet possessing sufficient understanding to be conscious of that weakness. Finding this method the securest way of unburthening his folly, he had so accustomed himself to it, that it was now strengthened into habit, and it was difficult to discern whether he was in jest or earnest. If by chance, as sometimes was the case, he uttered a phrase of common sense, or wit, it was received as the genuine product of his native geni-

us,

us, while his unceasing vollies of ignorance and stupidity were deemed the ebullitions of a fruitful fancy and a sportive humour.

We had not sat long before Mr. Gross came in, and addressing himself to Caroline, expressed his happiness at being appointed to play *Castalio* to her *Monimia.*

I must confess I felt an embarrassment in his presence. There was something in his manner that might have created uneasiness in the securest husband. He was polite, gay, young, and handsome, having a person finely proportioned, with an aspect manly and commanding. There was also an assurance about him, that indicated a career of easy conquest over the other sex; and the first sentence he uttered in my hearing, I in my own mind stamped Mr. Bantom a cuckold.

Caroline returned his compliments with a coldness she ever displayed to strangers, and which was the more frigid, in proportion to their attention. But this in no way disconcerted him, who still continued to pour forth a strain of polite and complimentary phraseology, until he was disturbed by being informed that the stage waited for him, on which he arose, bowed, and retired.

Impelled by envy, I followed, and stood by the side-wing, to view him as an actor.

In vain I sought to sooth myself by vanity; for if I found him my superior *off*, he was still more so *on* the stage. He moved with the same ease amid the scene, as he had discovered in private conversation. His deportment was elegant and manly, while every sentence he

he uttered displayed the truest study of a master's mind. In short, there seemed nothing wanting to complete the finished actor, but a better voice, in which he was deficient; it being weak, monotonous, and incapable of harmony.

Conscious of the impossibility of standing a rival before this gentleman, I ceased to hope it, and wrung from my heart a silent confession of his superior excellence; for I had before imagined, that notwithstanding the Manager's unfavourable opinion of me, I should no sooner make my appearance, than be exalted to the highest walks of the drama. Such was my vain anticipation, till checked by the splendid merits of another.

Mrs. Bantom I found to possess no other recommendation than her person. She wanted not spirit, but her spirit waited not upon the judgment.

I kept

I kept my station till the act was finished, surveying with scrutinizing jealousy the abilities of the rest. None were less than tolerable, and some respectable; but there was nothing about them prominent enough to raise my envy, or disturb my pride.

I next viewed the house, which I found infinitely to surpass the opinion I had formed from its outside appearance; it being rich in ornament. But the plan was singular; the audience part being perfectly square, and the pit elevated to an angle of near forty-five degrees. It contained one row of boxes, and one gallery. It was but thinly attended that night; the company, however, appeared very respectable.

On my return to the green-room, I found Caroline in conversation with Case and Mr. Gross. The former, for

the first time in his life, shook me by the hand, and expressed his happiness at my safe arrival, hoping at the same time that I would not be jealous of him, for talking to my wife when I was absent.

"Good Heaven," cried Mr. Gross, "are you married, Madam? and is this gentleman your husband?"

Upon Caroline's answering in the affirmative, he proceeded:

"Then, Sir, after congratulating you on the possession of such loveliness, I must entreat your pardon, for the seeming impropriety of my conduct; for, on supposition that the lady was single, I conceived myself, as a brother actor, as much entitled to her esteem, which I confess I hoped to attain, as any other person. But I am well ac-

quainted,"

quainted," continued he, giving a significant glance at the company—"I am well acquainted with the delicacy of a husband's situation; well acquainted with the busy impertinencies of a prying and suspicious world. I trust, Madam, you will accept my best respects; nor will you, Sir, I hope, reject my apology, or my friendship." Saying which, he held out his hand, and in a moment we were the greatest friends in the world.

He still attached himself to our society, and seemed to court our esteem, which I attributed to the hostile state he remained in with the rest of the company.

I saw it was impossible to hold his friendship without sacrificing the goodwill of all the rest, and I was at first extremely at a loss in what manner to conduct

conduct myself. But the respect I had for his merit, and his apparently open nature, together with an ill-natured indifference from the rest, soon influenced me in his favour; and from that very evening, we were the greatest cronies in the theatre.

I believe too, there was a share of self-interest in the case; for knowing him to be the *prime minister* of the Manager, I concluded it most politic to incline myself to that party.

In the midst of our conversation, Mr. Bantom accosted, and informed us that he had altered his mind with respect to the ensuing play; which, instead of the *Orphan*, should be *Tamerlane*. *Bajazet* he would take upon himself, and desired Mr. Gross to take *Monesis*; Case, *Tamerlane*; Caroline, *Arpasia*; and me *Stratocles*: then appointing the other charac-

characters, he invited Mr. Gross to sup with him, and withdrew.

The part of *Arpasia* was new to Caroline; she therefore begged I would hasten home, in order that she might read it through that night. I accordingly obeyed.

CHAP. VIII.

ON the following day, while Caroline was busy at her study, I wrote to Mr. Wilmot, informing him of every curious event, subsequently to our leaving his friendly roof. Nor did I forget my prison companion, Mr. Freeman, whose esteem I valued in an eminent degree.

The constant conversation of Caroline and myself was upon her father, whose situation and whose mistake we daily regretted. We had made various attempts to discover him, but in vain. We had been informed from London, that he had joined the Edinburgh company, but on writing there, were answered in the negative.

The

The night of performance being come, we were at the theatre just as the doors opened, and with surprize beheld a vast number of people collected in a crowd at a little distance from it, who, instead of approaching the house, remained in a large circle, laughing immoderately at some object in the centre.

First leading Caroline to her room, I returned to the street, and with much difficulty penetrated to the middle of the throng, when I discovered the object of their mirth to be no other than Mr. Mason, with a play-bill of an enormous length in one hand, in the other a number of benefit tickets. He was diverting his auditors with a curious harangue, in which he set forth the merits of the stage with all the strength he was master of, and analyzed the entertainments he promised to compliment

them with upon his benefit, the theme in question. He interrupted his discourse with every species of buffoonery, crying aloud,

"Who'll be poor Joey's friend? Who'll buy a ticket of little Joey? Take a ticket of honest Joey!"—This he accompanied with such grimace and caperings, as had the happiest effect upon the risibility of his hearers, who paid him well in return; for in the space of half an hour, during which I stood to view him, he disposed of at least twenty tickets.*

I cannot here help lamenting the degrading means which a country actor, even the most respectable, is obliged to use, in order to secure a tolerable benefit. His merit will go but a little way towards his reward. For who will voluntarily sacri-

fice their convenience, or exert their interest, in behalf of a man who, at the expiration of a week, they may, in all probability, see no more? No, he must go cap in hand, and with the humblest demeanour, paint his distress, and solicit their support: or he must attend their nocturnal revels, wait upon their smiles, and feed them with his jests. He must spout, sing, and be every way subservient to their wishes; and, after thus debasing human dignity, it is well if he finds himself enriched with a few guineas.

The part of *Stratocles* consists only of one short scene; but I felt myself highly compensated, when, at the conclusion of my longest speech, in which the fate of *Bajazet* is described, I met with a flattering burst of applause, and on my exit was highly complimented by Mr. Gross. Poor Case had the morti-

mortification of being hissed in every scene; Bantom was laughed at; his wife passed over in silence; Mr. Gross admired, and Caroline's praises thundered to the skies. I was, myself, astonished at her performance: she had never shewn such style before. Her scenes with *Bajazet* were animated and impassioned, to the first degree of excellence. The performers themselves were struck with her: the men approved, and the ladies gazed in silence, while Mrs. Bantom, on passing, darted a look of scorn at her, muttering something about fools, novelty, and girl.

For the next night the *Wonder* was given out, and the character of *Violante* assigned to Caroline, and to Mr. Gross that of *Don Felix*; while I was appointed to an humble part in the after-piece.

Passing Mr. Bantom's room on leaving

leaving the theatre, we heard his lady exclaiming,

"No, Sir, I'll be second to none of your new trollops!—I'll see your house in flames first, and you in the midst, before I'll submit to any such degradation after this time."

To which the husband returned,

"D—n my b—d, Ma'am, I suppose you'll submit to your own interest, won't you? if her merit crams the *mopusses* into your pocket, you'll put up with the affront, I hope?" We had now gone beyond the distance of hearing them, therefore hastened home, little doubting that Caroline was the object of their altercation.

On the following day we walked to survey the town: it was of very ancient date, and surrounded by an old

and

and decayed wall, with the remains of small towers at certain distances, which gave agreeable sensations to a mind fond of antiquity. The only public entrances, were by two gates situated at the east and western extremities, both of which plainly shewed the depredations of Time.

The market-place was a spacious square, and contained the best buildings. In the middle was a beautiful cross, supported by a dome on pillars of the Tuscan order. Without the walls were many delightful walks, and one in particular, to which many of the inhabitants used to resort in an evening. This was an extensive wood, in the centre of which was a fine spring and fountain, with a temple adjoining, where tea, coffee, &c. might be had.

This place was the constant retreat

of Caroline and myself, where we would range about the wood, and mix the labour of study with the surrounding scenes of nature and delight.

The performance of Caroline had roused the admiration of the town; and when the curtain drew up for the *Wonder*, the house was perfectly crowded.

She played with the same spirit she had evinced the night before; and Mr. Bantom was so conscious of her merit and attraction, that, spite of his lady, he for the following night appointed her to a leading character. When it arrived, she again proved her capability, and the manager again saw his interest fully answered by an overflowing audience.

But this consideration did not check the vanity, and even open hostility of

Mrs.

Mrs. Bantom, who continued to display every mark of disappointed pride, that female malice could suggest. Mr. Gross too, I perceived, shewed us less attention than at first, and never conversed with us but in her absence.

Mr. Case seemed to have divested himself of his harsh nature, and become softened into politeness. I was at a loss to divine the cause of so great an alteration, but concluded that it arose from gratified pride. He found himself placed above me, and desired no more; for I believe all his caprice arose from vanity.

The comedy of *Love makes a Man*, being one evening given out, the part of *Angelina* was assigned to Caroline; *Carlos* to Mr. Gross; *Clodio* to a Mr. Hall; *Don Lewis* to Mr. Mason; *Don Duart* to Case; *Sancho* to me, while Mr. Bantom was to play *Antonio*.

But

But on the evening of the following day, being that preceding the performance, Mr. Gross came to me, and requested I would undertake his character of *Carlos*, the Manager, he said, having agreed to it, on account of his having a bad cold, which had reduced his voice to a perfect aphony; observing at the same time, that it was highly proper I should commence a line more suitable to my abilities.

His last phrase found its way to my heart. I seized his hand, expressed my high sense of obligation, and confessed that *Carlos* was a part I should be proud of. Upon my entreaties he consented to spend the evening with us, and we passed it away in a very agreeable manner. He entertained us with many curious occurrences of his life; but, fearful of increasing his indisposition, departed at an early hour. I immediately

ately set hard to study, and did not go to rest till three in the morning, by which time I had pretty well perfected myself. Here too, let me indulge a digression, to tell the labours of a country actor.

They frequently play every night in the week, and rarely less than three. It is no novelty for the same person to perform two, or even three characters in the same piece, proceeding from the scarcity of performers; while the principal actors have perhaps five or six parts assigned them for each successive night. How then can they find time to digest the author's text, or dwell upon his beauties? It is a Herculean task, barely to walk through the evening's bustle, without stumbling upon a sentence, which, spite of their attempts to forget, will obtrude upon their memories. The baneful effects of

of nocturnal study is evidently imprinted on their countenance, and is frequently misinterpreted into the consequence of a debauched life, when, alas! a draught of table-beer, with bread and cheese, is the highest luxury they perhaps have known. Yet there are some who, from a happy gift of Nature, and strength of retentive faculties, surmount these obstacles, and blaze out in the full force of transcendant merit.

The time being at hand, I went in high spirits to the theatre, and soon was introduced to the audience in the character of *Carlos*. But, not to dwell tediously on description, suffice to say, that I played in such a manner as fully established my fame, and elevated me to the eminence to which I deemed myself entitled; second to no one but Mr. Gross, who beheld my performance, and paid me the handsomest encomiums.

ums. Nor did Mr. Bantom appear indifferent to my merits, which he complimented, and confessed himself deceived in; as an earnest of which, he appointed me the part of *Lewson*, in the *Gamester*, for my next; when Mr. Gross was to take *Beverley*, and Case, *Stukeley*; *Mrs. Beverley* by a lady named Morris; and *Charlotte* by Miss Willison, an agreeable and sprightly girl.

On entering the green-room in the course of the evening, the latter lady accosted me, and taking my hand, whispered,

"So, Sir, you are to be my lover, I understand, on Saturday next. I'm certain my performance will be exquisite, for I already feel a regard for you beyond that of a sister; and I dare say you are too gallant, to omit so happy an opportunity of falling deeply in love with me."

She

She accompanied this with a look that infinitely surpassed the surface of a compliment. It found its way through the frailty of nature, and reached my heart. It was the first time that the image of Caroline found a stranger's there, and it was the first time it ever revolted from the purest love.

"However proud," replied I, "Miss Willison, I am of hearing, I dare not believe you to be in earnest; for if I did, the happiness would drive me mad." At that instant seeing Caroline approach, I concluded, "but we will talk again of this."

"With all my heart," returned she, and retired to another part of the room.

The line of Miss Willison was sprightly comedy, in which she by far excelled every female in the company.

 Her

Her education was superior to every one's, except that of Caroline, whom she treated with much good nature and politeness.

In the action of turning round, I chanced to stumble against Mr. Case, and, on apologizing, received the following patient and polite reply: "D—n your clumsy hocks." I perceived that my success had revived his envy, and with it the brutality of his former behaviour.

My thoughts of Miss Willison kept me awake all night. I promised myself a happy conquest of her, and largely indulged my mind in the pleasures of anticipation. In vain did conscience oppose itself against desire. Alas! how easily can we argue ourselves into vice! I endeavoured to persuade myself into the propriety of my conduct, and so far succeeded, that in the end reason herself

self was vanquished by contending passion.

"It is disgraceful," said I, in my heart, "to pass away my youth in one tame concert of unvaried love."

Full of these ideas, I resolved to indulge in a full scope of unlicensed pleasure.

Accordingly, on the evening of performance, as Caroline had no business at the theatre, I advised her to remain at home, while I hastened to her rival, whom I found well pleased at my coming alone. After some exchange of conversation, she agreed that I should see her home at the dropping of the curtain.

I played *Lewson* so much to the satisfaction of Mr. Bantom, that he de-

sired I would perfect myself for the part of *Prince of Wales*, in *Henry the Fourth*, while poor Case went through *Stukely* so indifferently, and was so hissed by the audience, that he was appointed to the humble character of *Bardolph*.

Mr. Gross, who had in great part recovered from his cold, displayed all the mastery of his genius; and Mrs. Morris surprized us with such powers in *Mrs. Beverley*, as she had not been deemed to possess.

Miss Willison performed in the entertainment, and was not ready till the audience had left the theatre. Agreeable to her desire, I waited at the corner of a street, and when I had remained at my station about ten minutes, she came running to me, full of youth and frolic. We immediately proceeded towards her lodging, and had not passed

a dozen yards, before she broke forth as follows:

"My dear Templeton, I know not what your opinion may be concerning morality, or whether you have any opinion at all about it; but mine, I can assure you, is very singular: I conceive the business of our lives to be pleasure, and that they who teach themselves to enjoy the present moment, are the wisest of mankind, provided the attainment of those enjoyments is not made at the sacrifice of another's peace. Alas! why should we go sighing about the world, from infancy to the grave, and pass over a thousand solid gratifications, to feed ourselves with hope, and idle dreams, that often, when possessed, present themselves to us like a painted toy, with neither use or permanency, and only serve to set our wishes again upon the float, in search of some

new object, that may prove as dearly bought, and as fallacious as the first. I hold myself as an eagle, in my sail through life, who, on his airy flight, surveys each good beneath him, and freely takes his choice. In short, Templeton, you are a youth exactly to my taste, and let the confession prove how I esteem you. But do not let my candour lead you to think too cheaply of your conquest. Half my sex teem with as much levity as myself, although their policy teaches them to conceal it. Believe me, I am not so free with my favours as you may imagine, for no one ever yet possessed my person, who had not previously found the way to my heart, and a fool or a villain never made an impression there."

She delivered the above in a tone and manner so contrasted to her argument, that they seemed rather the

sugges-

suggestions of a Platonist, than of an Epicurean. She seemed to convey neither passion or licentiousness, but every sentence appeared the result of opinions long established.

I was answering her in all the warmth with which she had inspired me, when we reached her door. She then informed me, that the people of the house were punctual, discreet folks, and would not admit me with her at that late hour.

" But," concluded she, " if you will drink tea with me to-morrow, we will be as happy as youth and love can make us." She then brightened into a smile, and suffered me to press her in my arms. The door presently opening, I promised to attend her the following night, and parted.

I immediately hastened home to Caroline, and, on the way, framed an excuse for my intended absence, which the fulfilment of my promise to Miss Willison would occasion.

On entering our apartment, I found her looking over some writing with much earnestness. The moment she saw me, she rose, and presenting the paper, said,

" Here, behold the effusions of my poor brain, and though I have been idle, you cannot say I have been thoughtless too." I accepted it, and read as follows:

THE ACTOR AND NATURE.

A YOUTH, enraptur'd with the scenic art,
Felt all the ACTOR rush into his heart;
And, with the force of the dramatic page
Quite charm'd, resolv'd himself to grace the
STAGE.

" O,

"O, happy life," cried he, "of envied ease,
"Whose only labours are the task to please:
"How shall I love to join the sportive throng,
"When gay THALIA leads her band along!
"And how transported shall my passion glow,
"When her sad sister pours her tragic woe."

So spoke the Youth, with emulation fir'd,
Ambition prompted, and by hope inspir'd.
But yet, some sparks of diffidence possess'd
His untaught genius, and his fears confess'd.
These urged him on, with eager haste, t'explore
The haunt of NATURE, and her aid implore.

Deep in a wild, where ART had never trod,
He found the Goddess held her lov'd abode.
No state superfluous came her presence nigh:
The verdant landscape and the azure sky
Serv'd for her carpet and her canopy.
Her throne, a rock, whose rugged form denied
The sculptor's hand, and all his skill defied.
The varied Seasons in her train were found,
Who, passing, hail'd her in their equal round.
Before her oft would hoary Winter stand,
And move reluctant at her firm command.
Nor dar'd the rosy Spring her task delay,
But ask'd a blessing, and pursued her way.

With these, four others, Innocence and Truth,
And bloomy Health, and ever jocund Youth,
Moved on her paths, and there delighted play'd,
Nor ever from her varied pleasures stray'd;
While every object that around her stood,
Confess'd her reign, and own'd that reign was
good.

Before her throne the modest Youth now drew,
While from his cheeks dispersed the rosy hue.
His trembling limbs their firmness sought to gain,
But scarce their usual burthen could sustain.
In vain the organs of his speech he tried,
For tongue-tied bashfulness their pow'r denied.

The Goddess, smiling, felt her pity move,
And from her eyes beam'd forth maternal love;
Dispel'd each doubt and terror from his breast,
And quite restor'd his heaving heart to rest.
Now, lowly bending, at her feet he kneels,
And thus the purport of his wish reveals.

"O power benign! whose ample mind sur-
"veys
"Creation's tract, and whom the whole obeys,
"Deign to bestow thy supplicant his claim—
"To live eternal in the rolls of FAME.

"Teach

"Teach me, O teach me! on the STAGE to shine;
"To move in order with a grace divine,
"And read, with skill, the Poet's raptur'd line."

He ceas'd—and, while his breast with ardour burn'd,
Thus the great Matron of Mankind return'd.

"To teach the Youth, great in that art to be,
"Whose highest merit rests in copying me,
"Is simply this—Range round the world, and "trace
"The varied conduct of my varied race.
"Observe the PASSIONS in their strongest force,
"And mark each act resulting from their course.

"LOVE first behold, whose votaries are known
"By mingled joys and sorrows of their own:
"See his pale cheek, when Scorn repays his sighs;
"Mark his slow step, his wild and hollow eyes;
"See how he pines beneath the silent shade,
"And hugs the torment that he would evade:
"But, if returning passion heals the smart,
"What bliss extatic revels at his heart.
"His blooming cheek with Health herself then "vies,
"While youthful raptures sparkle from his eyes.
"Then his light tread outstrips the frighted hare,
"When up the lawn he flies to meet his Fair:

" His thoughts, his acts, his mistress all beguiles;
" He dies beneath her frown, or lives upon her
" smiles.
" Next HATE observe, whose heart malign ne'er
" knows
" The sweet response that from affection flows:
" Away she speeds, with madd'ning zeal along,
" Cursing each good of life and social throng.
" No peace she knows; no blessing can she give;
" No friendship share, and no kind act receive,
" A torment to herself, she still is found
" Scatt'ring her blasting ills on peaceful ground.
" FEAR next survey, whose trembling heart
" recoils
" At danger's path, and storming Anger's broils:
" And wakeful JEALOUSY with eyes cast down,
" Or brow compress'd, now curl'd in threatful
" frown:
" In vain he seeks t'assuage his soul by rest,
" Despair and doubt alternate rule his breast.
" AMBITION, crimson'd with his brother's blood,
" And meek CONTENT, aspiring to do good;
" The MURD'RER's step, and horror-brooding
" brow,
" The fawning COURTIER, and his empty show;
" The SOLDIER brawling for tumultuous war,
" The vile SEDUCER breaking Virtue's law;

" YOUTH

"Youth full of fire, intrepid, blooming, strong,
"And Age suspectful of each worldly wrong.

"These must thou study with unceasing art,
"And learn from me the language of the heart.
"Heed not the noisy burst of fools' amaze,
"Whose praise is censure, and whose censure
"praise.
"But act from me, and Truth shall lead to Fame—
"For know, that Truth and Nature are the
"same."

The Goddess ceas'd.—The Youth with grate-
ful mien,
Bow'd, and withdrew from the celestial scene;
Eager he cross'd each intervening plain,
And join'd the circle of mankind again.

"I must not praise you, Caroline," said I, "lest you turn Poetress, and, alas! it is a starving trade—worse than that of a Strolling Player."

"I fear so too," returned she, "at least, it would prove so with me; I therefore renounce it from this time."

CHAP. IX.

I WAS faithful to my appointment with Miss Willison, for, by five o'clock on Sunday evening I was in her presence. She was prepared to meet me with all the

> " Wanton wiles, and dimples sleek
> " That love to dwell on Hebe's cheek."

But, reader, the aim of this work is, by no means, to paint vice in her beautiful colours; and, lest thou shouldst be some virtuous female of sixteen, or of sixty, I will pass over this scene, which, when acted, afforded interest to none but ourselves; and if related to thee, would only tend to raise sensations which might, unhappily, deprive thee of thy proper night's sleep. We parted

at

at eleven o'clock, with mutual professions of continued love.

My merit being now established, by the repeated applauses of the audience, I continued to second Mr. Gross every successive night, and the business of the theatre went on as smoothly as possible, when it was interrupted by the following accident.

One evening, being on the stage, and proceeding with my part, I was suddenly alarmed by a violent exclamation behind the scenes, of

"O, help! for Christ's sake help!" which was presently followed by a loud scream from a female.

I was so disturbed that I could not go on, and, informing the audience that I feared some accident had happened, left

left the scene unfinished, and flew to the place of tumult, where I found all the company surrounding their Manager, who was sitting on the floor, holding up one of his legs, and making most piteous faces and lamentations.

At the desire of Mr. Gross he was carried into the green-room, where I inquired the nature of his complaint, and learned, that on crossing one of the slides, he had entangled his right foot, and sprained it in so shocking a manner, that it was swelled to twice its usual dimensions.

A surgeon was immediately sent for, while we remained condoling with, and endeavouring to comfort him, by an assurance of its being no more than a common bruise, which would be attended with no serious consequences.

All this time Mrs. Bantom unceasingly hugged him, exclaiming in the bitterest anguish imaginable,

"O, my love! my life! my best and dearest husband!—how can I ease your pain?—tell me what I can do to ease you?" at the same time rubbing his foot and ankle, to the intolerable smart of the poor sufferer.

The audience becoming impatient to know the cause of their amusement being interrupted, to prevent the tumult increasing, I resumed my business, first informing them of Mr. Bantom's accident.

The scene finished, I returned to the green-room, where I observed the surgeon employed in binding up his leg; which done, he desired the standers by to prepare a chair upon which to convey

vey him home; but finding none sufficiently commodious, they recommended a triumphal car, which had lately been fitted up for a pantomime, and assuring him of its strength, he consented to their proposal. In a short time it was carried down to the street door, and the unfortunate Manager carefully deposited in it by the tender care of Mr. Gross and two others.

He was no sooner seated, than Mrs. Bantom, whether from extreme tenderness, or a degree of vanity peculiar to her sex, I know not, insisted on being admitted to the honours of her husband, in which he acquiesced. Accordingly, being mounted, away they went, drawn by a dozen boys, and followed by the shouts and admiration of a large mob.

But unstable, O man! are the foundations

dations of thy honour! This splendid chariot, built for a god, disdained its mortal burthen, and, before it had proceeded a hundred yards, suffered one of the wheels to escape its axle; on which it came tumbling to the earth, to the dreadful discomfiture of the poor invalid and his amiable consort.

The novelty of the carriage, the posture and screams of the lady, with the roarings of her husband, afforded a spectacle, such as, perhaps, the inhabitants of a country town never before had witnessed.

O had I sufficient wit to outweigh my offence, or did I not fear, reader, that thou wouldst, in a rage of decency, burn my book, now could I paint a picture that would serve an amateur to dwell on for a month! I would tell what beauties Mrs. Bantom disclosed—

"But

"But this eternal blazon must not be
"To ears of flesh and blood."

The miserable Manager, finding no other convenience at hand, suffered himself to be hoisted on the shoulders of a sturdy fellow, who offered himself for the humane purpose, and was in that manner carried in safety to his lodgings, while his aggrieved lady, after giving orders for the thriftless car to be sent back, followed him in mournful silence.

The next morning I called to inquire after his health, and was ushered into his bed-room, where I found him supported by bolsters and pillows, in the act of sipping mulled wine, out of a bason which his fair wife held to his mouth, with the most engaging concern; while on the other side stood Mr. Gross, with a plate of toast in his hand,

hand, kindly inviting his master to accept a piece. The features of the poor gentleman, if features they might be called, betokened the strongest marks of gratitude to Heaven, for thus blessing him with such a wife, and such a friend.

Upon expressing my concern for his situation, he shook his head, and sighed.

"Ah! thank the Lord it's no worse!"

"True, Sir," said I, "you might have broken your leg."

"D—n my b—d, Sir," returned he in a kind of triumph, "I might have broken my neck!—and then what would have become of you all!—well, well, it can't be helped:—it's only a fortnight's holiday for me, that's all, for the humbug surgeon tells me I shall be

confined

confined full that time. So I shall trust the command of my affairs to my worthy and true friend Gross, who I hope will meet with proper respect."

"My dear Sir," interrupted the latter, "if every person in the theatre was like Mr. Templeton, there would be no need of any other commander than yourself; but I trust he will assist me with his good advice. Thanking him for the compliment, I assured him of my respect, and the regard I had for the interest of those under whom I was employed; then, taking leave, returned home.

A few days after this, just as I had finished my breakfast, a person came running out of breath, and desired I would go that instant to Mr. Bantom. Without stopping to inquire the cause of his haste, I obeyed the summons,

mons, and was shortly in the chamber of the Manager.

I again found him sitting upright in his bed, but, instead of his former assistants, I now saw none but an old woman employed in shewing to him an empty trunk. The moment he perceived me, he roared out,

"D—n me, they're gone!—they're flown!—hopp'd the twig, and shaved me!—boned every thing, even to my flannel night-cap."

"Good Heaven, Sir," demanded I, "whom do you mean?"

"Mean!" answered he—"why, I mean that rascal my friend, and that wh—e my wife. I tell you, they have *boned* every article I had, and pocketed the yellow *mopusses*; but, d—n me, let 'em

'em go to h—ll: it won't do 'em much good; so they'd better make the best market they can, for they'll finger no more of mine. D—n me, Sir, I'm glad on't!—glad on't, with all my heart! I'm a free man again, with no b—ch of a wh—e to controul me."

It was with extreme difficulty that I could check myself from laughter; but I managed with a serious face, to congratulate him on his philosophy, which could thus, in so manly a manner, draw good from evil.

Upon farther inquiry, I learnt that they had actually stripped him of every thing useful, even to his wearing apparel, leaving him nothing but the shirt and bed-gown he had then on. They had also dexterously possessed themselves of a hundred guineas, which he had cautiously placed in a bag under his pillow.

I could not help comparing the conduct of this friend and wife with what I had observed in them on my first visit, after the accident of this poor dupe.

"O hypocrisy!" said I, "thou art too deep for men to fathom; thou, indeed, standst secure before every throne but ONE."

When I had remained with him about half an hour, we were interrupted by the flocking in of nearly all the company, who with words of condolence, but looks of triumph, seemed to demand the confession of his former neglect of their watchful care and repeated hints. But instead of greeting them with any such acknowledgments, he addressed them thus:

"What now, what now! What the

devil do ye all want? I suppose you're come to call me an old fool, and a gull, for my pains. May be so—but d—n me, what's that to any of ye?—I tell ye, I'm glad on't. I shall be bothered no more, with either their palaver, or your quizzing; so bundle back till I send for ye."

Mr. Mason, bowing to the ground, observed, that they had only come as dutiful children, to offer him their services.

"Then," returned he, "lead them all to the theatre, Mr. Corporal, and I'll soon find business for you, and the rest too. But now I think on't, let them go by themselves, while you and Templeton stay, and take my orders for the future arrangements, till I can hop about again."

The

The rest then retired, while Mason and I remained, in obedience to his desire.

He then informed us, that, till his recovery, he should entrust his affairs entirely to our management.

"That is," said he, "I shall give out my orders, mind ye, and look to you for the performance of them." Then giving us a list of plays he had chosen for the successive nights, and appointing the characters, he desired us to take care of the *rhino*, and bring all to him every evening, before we went home; which we faithfully promising, left him for the day.

We were no sooner in the street, than Mason, with a look and tone of the utmost importance, addressed me as follows:

" Mr. Templeton, we are now raised to an elevation infinitely above our compeers. Mr. Bantom has honoured us with his fullest confidence. We ourselves ought best to know how far we deserve such a flattering distinction; but certain it is, he has discovered in us something beyond the common run of mankind. We must now act in concert: we must cast to the dogs, that poor familiarity with the rest, that they may know who we are, and pay us proper respect and obedience."

I was, as usual, rather at a loss to conceive whether this mimic was in jest, or not; but believing him to be in the latter, I replied, that my conduct would be the same as ever, and that, so far was I from feeling any pride on the occasion, I sincerely regretted that Mr. Bantom had heaped so much unprofitable trouble upon me.

To this he returned, that if I felt the least objection, he would undertake the whole himself, and instantly return back to acquaint the Manager of my wishes.

I told him, he might proceed as he thought proper; but that, as Mr. Bantom had requested it, I should certainly pursue his interest. Saying which, I left him, and hastened home, to inform Caroline of the event, when I found a letter had been left for me in my absence; on opening which, I read:

"DEAR TEMPLETON,

"I have not sufficient time to dwell upon particulars. No doubt, you will be informed of all: but I should be sorry to lose your esteem. Mine is

"A fault that easy pardon might receive,
"Were lovers judges, or could hell forgive."

"I have played sharply with a man who plays the

the sharp on hundreds. But love urges me on: in love, therefore, let me find an excuse. Do not, if we should ever meet again, deny me your friendship.

"Adieu!

"S. Gross."

It was afterwards learnt, that they had proceeded to the next sea-port town, and taken shipping. I never more saw either of them; but some years after, heard that, having returned to England with subsided love, they parted. The fate of Mrs. Bantom was never known, but her paramour, having found means to recommend himself to a lady of virtue and fortune, married her, and retired to the North.

I entered on the management of the theatre with so much spirit, that I found every thing perfectly easy; giving every performer satisfaction, and even keeping Case from revolting. Mr.

Bantom

Bantom was so well satisfied with my success, that he thought proper to raise my salary to sixteen shillings, which was the same as Mason enjoyed; he being the oldest in the company, and of approved honesty; the only virtue, indeed, of which he could boast.

In the mean time, I continued my visits to Miss Willison, whose affection seemed to gain strength at every meeting. I seldom failed going to her every third day, and as I did not make my appearance till dusk, there was no apprehension of a discovery. I frequently accused myself in the presence of my wife, but could not muster sufficient resolution to alter my conduct.

"While I insult not thy virtue, Caroline," said I to myself, "my conscience shall acquit me."

Indeed, had I been inclined to extend my conquests, I might have found ample scope; for I seldom walked abroad but I was intercepted by many an inviting eye. Nor do I believe it to have proceeded from any attractive merit I possessed, but from a knowledge of my profession. The female world have an infatuation towards all public characters: they cannot help it. They live but to be admired; and in being placed by the side of those who catch the public gaze, their ambition is in part gratified. How many women of sense have linked themselves to a bully in a red coat, an ideot in a gown, or a coxcomb in buskins! while modest merit has sighed for them in silence, unpitied and contemned.

But my heart was never formed to triumph in seduction. Passion no sooner prompted, than honour interposed

posed to check the fire of youth, except in a few instances, where circumstances attending to assist the one, the other retreated before the united force of impelling Nature and yielding opportunity.

I now took the lead in tragedy and polite comedy, in both of which Caroline was the chief partner of my scenes. Mason and myself had carefully taken the receipts of each night's performance, and, for our attention, Bantom constantly regaled us with a bowl of punch, while he examined the cash with great circumspection.

During his confinement the following curious adventure occurred, relative to Mrs. Brown :

She lodged in the environs of the town, and on returning home one even-

ing from the theatre, was very roughly saluted by a drunken ploughman, who, Bacchus like, must pay his court to Venus; but our nymph not admiring his rude embraces, made so stout a resistance, as in the end forced him to forego his amour. Proud of her prowess, which she on the following day sounded forth to all our company, she after this deemed herself a match for any single man on earth, and requested leave to carry, in future, a pair of old horse-pistols belonging to the theatre, to protect her tried and unsullied virtue. This being granted, she every night shouldered her weapons, and, thus arrayed, marched undaunted home.

She had soon reason to rejoice at this precaution; for returning once later than usual, with a bundle containing her stage apparel, she was attacked by two ruffians, who attempted to snatch

it

it from her. She courageously presented her pistols, one in each hand, and declared, that if they approached one inch, she would shoot them.

"Fire, and be d—n'd!" cried one of them. "Think ye we are frightened at a woman?" and instantly approached. Mrs. Brown then snapped both her pistols; but, alas! the pistols were silent; nor need this excite thy wonder, reader, when I inform thee, that our heroine had all along forgotten to load them.

The robbers now, without farther hesitation, both sprung upon her, and endeavoured to secure the bundle, and wrench the harmless weapons from her hand; but Mrs. Brown, who, excepting that of caution, possessed every other quality for a warrior, was not so easily to be overcome. She grappled her treasure with redoubled strength, and

kicked, and bit, and screamed to such a degree, that the depredators, conceiving her to be nothing less than the devil in disguise, retired some paces back in terror.

Her screams had reached the ears of two waggoners driving their team, and who with manly fortitude flew to the scene of action, hallooing as they ran. Our heroine now feeling herself at liberty, and having recovered breath, sprung upon the robber who stood nearest, and pinioned him with Amazonian strength till the waggoners came up, into whose charge she delivered him, and briefly related to them the adventure. The other had carefully taken to his heels, and, favoured by the night, got clear off.

The waggoners were proceeding to the town with a load of hay, with which they

they were to meet their master at next morning's market. It being, therefore, impossible for them to admit of delay, they agreed that Mrs. Brown should return back with them, and, with their assistance, conduct the thief to the presence of the mayor, as soon as he should be risen next day.

On arriving at the town, their waggon was drawn to its stand, and the horses led to the stable. A consultation then took place, in what manner to dispose of the prisoner, when Mrs. Brown exclaimed, in the words of Alexander:

"Give the lion to a lion."—"Anan?" said the waggoners.—"Put him in the stable with his brother-breasts," cried she. The men obeying her command dragged him in, and taking particular precaution to fasten the door, withdrew with their Amazon into the tap-room where

where they regaled themselves till morning.

At seven o'clock they issued out, in order to conduct the culprit to justice; but on coming to the stable-door, observed a deal of loose mould, and a hole deep enough to admit the body of a man. There needed no vast stretch of imagination, to divine both the cause and the effect of this: they, therefore, in silence opened the door, and found their hero gone. Mrs. Brown, however, would, notwithstanding, insist on going to the mayor, and of being accompanied by the waggoners, as witnesses of the fact. Accordingly away they went, and were immediately introduced before his worship, to whom she gave a circumstantial account of the whole transaction, displaying her pistols and her bundle in the greatest triumph, while the two countrymen corroborated the whole.

The Mayor, paying her great encomiums for the courage and address she had displayed, promised that every exertion should be made to overtake the offender. Those exertions, however, proved in vain, as he never more was heard of.

This adventure of Mrs. Brown obtained her the greatest popularity, and produced her the richest benefit she had ever known. It was also the means of rescuing her from the humble state of a Strolling Actress, and placing her in a situation, according to her opinion, infinitely more desirable. The story had reached the ears of an old military officer residing in the town, who, captivated with such an instance of female courage, sent for her to hear the fact from her own lips. His admiration was increased by the spirited style in which she related it, and, by way of honouring

honouring her victory, he commanded a soldier to guard her home in future. The old veteran himself, at times, undertook this duty, and shortly became so enamoured of his heroine, that he took her into keeping.

In less than a fortnight, the Manager was able, with the assistance of a stick, to attend the theatre; and happy it was for him—the time for quitting the town being nearly at hand.

About this period, I was surprized by a visit from the young gentleman whose father I had rescued from the beggars. He informed me that his parent had but just recovered from the illness occasioned by his wounds; that, however, his mind had been in a more composed state than he had enjoyed a long while. The purpose of his visit, he said, was to request myself and Caroline

roline would spend the following day at his house, where the thanks and gratitude of the whole family awaited us. We accordingly went, and were received as might be expected, and were rejoiced to find Mr. Orchard, (which was the gentleman's name,) in a state of convalescence.

He was now in the utmost harmony of faculties, and proved a pleasing and instructive companion, except that he appeared too fond of shewing his learning, which, indeed, was pretty extensive; at the same time, he accompanied it with such abundant good-nature, that the *Pedant* disgusted not so much as the *Gentleman* interested.

We passed the day in the happiest manner imaginable, and, at parting, he insisted on my accepting a handsome pair of silver-mounted pistols.

"They may possibly prove of use to you," said he, "and I am sure will never be presented but in a good cause. For my own part, I have cast off my knight-errantry, and hope to pass away my days in peace." Then, repeating his obligations to me, desired I would consider his house my home, and his purse my own, in time of need.

CHAP. X.

FOUR days after, we all set off to the next town; Caroline and myself, with three or four more, going by the stage.

On our arrival, we dined at the inn where the coach set up, and the same day procured convenient lodgings in the house of a shoe-maker. I entertained but poor hopes of my benefit at this place, and, in my heart, censured the cunning of Bantom, who had assigned it for me here. The town was small, and its houses lay thinly scattered about, so as to form no regular street: indeed it was, properly, nothing more than a village. My spirits, however, revived, on learning that a regiment

regiment of foot, and one of horse, were quartered about it, and that the inhabitants, being chiefly manufacturers, were consequently confined within doors, so that a stranger might easily be deceived in his calculation.

The second evening of our arrival we played *Twelfth Night*, when I was extremely gratified on finding the house completely full. The theatre was plastered on the outside, and its front graced by a portico that extended itself over the three doors, making a very pretty appearance, which fully corresponded with the neatness of the inside.

The audience were, withal, very genteel, and at the end of the play, several gentlemen came behind the scenes to converse with Mr. Bantom, with whom they seemed on good terms. I observed

served them, too, extremely attentive to our ladies, and particularly to Caroline, who answered their smiling compliments with the most serious air. I was pleased at observing the reserve with which Miss Willison treated them, for whom, on that account, my regard greatly increased.

On the following morning, I awoke with such a soreness at my throat, that I was unable to speak, except in a whisper, and totally incapable of swallowing any thing of substance. I was, consequently, incompetent to attend my business at the theatre that evening; which, during the first fortnight, was open nightly. Caroline, therefore, hastened to inform the Manager, that he might immediately appoint some one to take my character.

Several days had passed without the

least abatement of my disorder, and a close confinement was deemed necessary for my recovery.

The tender concern of Caroline, discovered her in another amiable point of view, and I could not avoid reproaching myself for having suffered a stranger to share those affections which, in justice, belonged to her alone.

One evening during my confinement, on her return from the theatre, I perceived her countenance marked with sorrow, and, on my demanding the cause, she, after a short silence, burst into tears. My curiosity was consequently augmented, and I began to press her in very earnest terms, to explain the occasion to me, when, with some hesitation, she assured me that nothing had taken place, and that her sole affliction arose from a considera-

tion

tion of our destitute condition, and my misfortune.

I plainly saw there must be something more than she chose to explain, but ceased to urge her farther; for I was really apprehensive of her having made some discovery respecting my connexion with Miss Willison, and, fearful of making some flagrant blunder that would betray me, deemed it most prudent to drop the subject. I was, however, mistaken, for the next day she was as cheerful as ever, and I could not read the least marks of jealousy in her countenance or her conduct. But on her return again in the evening from the theatre, her features had re-assumed their melancholy. I immediately relapsed into my former suspicions, but, for the same reasons, did not think proper to provoke an explanation. But, again, the smiles of Caroline returned

with the day, and again my fears were banished.

I now found myself considerably better, being able to speak, and to enjoy my meals, though by no means in a condition to resume my duty at the theatre. I was desirous of attending Caroline in the evening, but she, fearful of a relapse, would not permit me, and promising to return as early as possible, not having to play in the after-piece, went once more alone.

I employed my hours in reading till the clock struck ten, and Caroline had not arrived. It was beyond her necessary time, and I began to be impatient; but that impatience changed into alarm, when another hour had passed and she was still absent. Full of apprehension for her safety, I seized my hat and was proceeding down stairs, when I heard

her voice at the door, on which I resumed my chair. She was instantly in the room; but guess my surprize on seeing her introduce a gentleman in the uniform of a naval captain, who no sooner beheld me than he started back, and stood motionless. Spite of the astonishment that dwelt upon his features, I recognized him to be my friend, school-fellow, and ship-mate, Brent, and was on the point of springing to embrace him, but a sudden impression of jealousy with-held and checked the force of my regard. I remained fixed to my seat, gazing alternately on him and Caroline; when she, after surveying us both a few seconds, spoke to him as follows:

" There, Sir, you behold the husband of my heart, without whose love I cannot exist, or, without deserving it,

be happy; and, surely, a soul like yours, must triumph at my conduct; for I am willing to believe you generous, though misguided. And you, my dear Templeton, listen to me calmly.—This gentleman, who deserves my censure, no less merits your thanks; for on the night before last, he rescued me from the assaults of a villain, and conducted me in safety home. You discovered my agitation, and demanded the cause, when I, fearing to hurt your feelings, and perhaps injure your health, returned an evasive answer.

"He accosted me this evening behind the scenes, and solicited so earnestly to conduct me home again, that, after his service to me, it would have been, perhaps, a breach of politeness to have refused him; but my intention was, to introduce him to your acquaint-

ance, that he might receive your acknowledgments for his generous conduct."

"Stop, Madam, stop!" exclaimed Captain Brent (for such he was), his features having resumed their proper cast—"Stop, and let me speak. O, God! and do I now behold my long regretted friend? and is that angel of perfection his wife? Templeton, forgive me!—forgive me for having loved her, though innocently, more than a friend ought to do; but my services have made amends. I rescued her from the grasp of some scoundrel, who was hauling her from her proper course, spite of her shrieks and resistance; I am sorry, that in my care for her, I suffered the villain to escape; but no matter, she is safe, and we must rejoice. Templeton, hear a sailor's honest declaration. I no sooner saw her,

and heard her speak, than I loved, and requested to guard her home. I had been, myself, that evening to the play, and was reflecting on the merits of Mrs. Templeton, just as the event took place. It seemed as if Heaven had thrown me in her way. I saw her home in safety; but my regard was of too respectful a nature to disclose itself on so short an acquaintance. I however, resolved to see her this evening, in the hopes of gaining her consent to marry me. I accordingly inquired for her behind the scenes, where, on soliciting to see her home, she at last reluctantly consented. On our way, I told her, and it was what I then felt, that I must bid adieu to happiness, unless she would be mine. To which she made this reply: That "as the first step to my future peace, I should converse this evening with her at home." —Judge my happiness at hearing this, and

and then judge my surprize, on entering this room, to find she had a husband, and he too my dearest friend! You now see, what a treasure you possess, and how unlimited should be your joy. I hope too, you will do me the justice to believe, that, even if I could, I would not wrong my friend for a moment, although it were to purchase me unthought of pleasure, and that I already feel my love for this amiable girl, changed into respectful friendship. Now, then, Templeton, will you deny me your esteem?"

I could contain no longer, but seizing his hand, and grasping it with earnest friendship, gave vent to the fulness of my heart, by assuring him that he was dear to me as a brother. But again, a sudden idea of suspicion crossed me. I turned to Caroline, and with eagerness demanded what

what had detained her so long from home.

" I meant to have explained to you," said she, " that on account of Miss Willison being suddenly indisposed, I was under the necessity of taking her character in the entertainment." I was instantly satisfied, and again grasping the hand of my friend, welcomed him to my heart.

I urged him to stay and sup with us; but, perceiving my indisposition, he insisted on leaving me to rest, under a promise of dining with us on the following day.

Notwithstanding the interest of the above event, and matchless conduct of Caroline, I could not sleep, from the consideration of Miss Willison's sudden illness: yet, anxious as I was to

learn the particulars, I durst not make the necessary inquiries. Such is the nature of vice!—fear and suspicion haunt its votaries, and act as continual barriers to their peace.

Captain Brent, according to his promise, returned on the following day, when we passed our time in a pleasing retrospection of the scenes we had gone over in our more juvenile years.

He related the fortunes of several of our ship-mates; none of whom had succeeded so well as himself; for he had not been possessed of a Lieutenant's commission half a year, before he made a voyage up the Mediterranean, where his Captain dying, the command devolved on him. He proceeded on the destination, and executed the service with so much propriety, and good seamanship, that on his return he was

instantly made, and received into favour by the first lord of the Admiralty. He farther informed me, that his ship was then lying at Portsmouth to receive some repair, during which he had seized the opportunity of visiting his only sister, who was married to one of the principal manufacturers of this town, and to whom he would introduce us on the ensuing Sunday.

Captain Brent did not depart till two in the morning, and not without our promise of attending him to his brother-in-law on the day appointed.

Accordingly, when the Sunday arrived, he came, as he expressed it, to convoy us.

The reception we met with from the master and mistress of the house, was strangely contrasted. The first was polite

polite and affable; the last, ill-natured and proud. She affected a condescension, that was no less burthensome to herself than offensive to us. In short, she was, both in person and manners, the very antithesis to her brother. She viewed Caroline with so supercilious an air, that it was impossible to avoid noticing it; and though the latter attempted to thaw the frigidity of her temper by the most engaging attention, it was to no purpose; for she deigned not to answer them by the least token of approbation, till poor Caroline, provoked at her inflexibility, assumed a contempt that amply spoke her resentment. On her right side sat their only child, a boy about eight years old the most rude and ungovernable imp that ever disturbed the patience of age It was easy to perceive from whom he derived his education. "Such mothers," said a late celebrated writer

 "mak

"make their children either *mannerly monkies*, or *wild idle boys*."

The Captain perceiving our situation, could not avoid expressing his indignation in the following manner:

"Sister, what ails you? I have brought my friends here to be happy; but how is it possible they should be so, while you o'ercloud your features with that inhospitable aspect? For Heaven's sake dispel it, and be cheerful!"

To this she answered, that her features wore the cast which God had given them, nor could she see any necessity for affecting a look of which she was not mistress.

"It is no matter, sister," said he—"they will one day relax;" and then remained

remained silent till dinner was over, the cloth removed, and the wine brought upon the table, when filling each person a glass, he with the utmost good-nature addressed her thus:

"Sister, if you will smile, this wine shall become the draught of *Lethe*—Drink to us, and we shall be happy!"

She only looked at her husband, with a countenance unaltered, and at perfect war with sociality. The poor man withdrew his eyes from her, fixed them on his brother, and sighed.

"Dear sister," resumed the Captain, "go to bed."

"For what, pray, Sir?" demanded she.

"Because you are ill, at least, because you look so."

 "Then,

" Then, Sir, my looks deceive you," replied she, " for I am in perfect health."

" I am glad of my error," said he again; " but will you not to bed, good sister? Sweet sister, then, farewell! and, happy brother, farewell too!—My friend Templeton, and you, Madam, come, we will walk a while, and, being Sunday, say our prayers."

We then all three arose, and making our obedience, issued, arm in arm, into the street, towards my lodgings, in silence, till we came opposite a tavern, when the Captain, begging us to proceed, and promising to follow us home, entered it.

We were scarcely seated, before he arrived with a basket in his hand, out of which he with great deliberation took

a dozen

a dozen bottles of wine, and placing three or four upon the table, and the rest on the floor, returned the basket to a boy who waited to receive it; telling him at the same time, to remember the house.

"Now," said he, "we will be as jovial as wine and friendship can make us. Remember, I invited you to spend the day with me; and as I am but a poor wandering sailor, with no house over my head, you will not, I hope, be so inhospitable as to deny me yours. But you must exceed that liberal act, and not only grant me leave to remain here, but resign your command into my hands. I am, therefore, the master from this moment, and shall, doubtless, find you both too polite to infringe upon my prerogative."

"This sister, believe me," continued he,

he, "has greatly disconcerted me. You, Templeton, I know, must laugh at her insignificance; but I fear your Caroline is shocked at her ungenerous behaviour. She will, perhaps, imagine it a family complaint; if so, I must consequently suffer in her good opinion, which, by my soul, I would not lose for the world."

To this Caroline returned, that he must entertain a very humble opinion of her intellects, in imagining her biassed by so weak a reason.

"No, Sir," continued she; "so far from thinking you possessed of such a nature, I am willing to believe it is not your sister's, but that her behaviour arose from some accidental cause."

"You are full of charity," returned he; "but I am sorry to say, mistaken.

She was ever the same; fretful in her infancy, peevish in her youth, and envious in her womanhood. Envious, I say; for she could not bear the comparison of her own defects with your perfections; and I never yet saw her happy in the presence of a beautiful woman. Her husband, poor fellow, is still in love, and had he presumed to have shewn the least signs of disapprobation at her incivility, it would have been at the expence of a week's peace; as she would have fallen desperately ill, and remained so till, by a confession of his error, he should again restore her to health. You must not wonder, therefore, at the extreme passiveness of his disposition, which could thus suffer us to quit his home without interruption. But no more of them—Come, let us drink, health, peace, and friendship." Saying which, he drank off a bumper,

while

while we responded his sentiment, and followed his example.

We then entered upon other subjects, among which was the relation of my adventures, subsequently to my quitting the navy.

In the course of the evening he expressed a wish to see me play the part of *Hamlet*, on which I promised to take it for my benefit, learning that he would remain here till after it should take place; and that Caroline should take *Ophelia*.

On informing him that I should not commence my business till Wednesday, he requested me to attend him on the following evening.

" I will take you," said he, " to the

Social

Social Club, for such it is called, where a number of gentlemen meet to spend a few hours in familiar conversation."

"First promise me, Sir," interrupted Caroline, "that you will not make him play the rake."

"No," said he, "I will be the *Mentor*, and he the *Telemachus*, of the evening."

"Then remember," replied she, "that your conduct must be *immortal*."

Time passed on in the most agreeable manner possible, and uninterruptedly, till ten o'clock, when we were roused by a great clattering on the stairs, and immediately after a violent kicking at our door, which being of that delicate frame so admired by the moderns, flew open, and admitted a

man,

man, who came stumbling to the farther end of our room, with a large tray in his hands, filled with various dishes, and every requisite for a feast.—

Captain Brent, springing up, caught him by the arm, and prevented the threatening mischief; then disburthening him of the tray, desired he would call for it next morning. Bidding us remember that he was commanding officer, he proceeded to place the dishes in order, which contained two roast and one boiled fowl, a fine piece of bacon, and a couple of tarts.

"I perceive," said I, "that you are resolved to stretch the utmost limits of your power; but I will not retract, because your tyranny will be but of short duration." At this instant one of my landlord's apprentices brought up some beer, and having delivered it, was returning

turning down stairs, when my friend stopped him, and presenting him with a bottle of wine, desired he would make merry over it; on which the youth thanked him, and hurried down with his prize to share it with his companions.

" My happiness is never complete," said the Captain, " unless all around me smile."

" It is the leading feature of benevolence," returned I.

" True," resumed he, " but it would shew more worthy, if it sought not to attract the applause of others. I have sullied mine by the breath of self-adulation."

" I cannot see it," rejoined I, " for it is wisdom to shew the pleasure that we feel in virtue."

" Temple-

"Templeton," exclaimed he, "I have done!—I am a rough sailor, and being unused to compliment, shall fail in contending with you."

"You wrong me, my friend," said I again, "for though a player, I have thoughts of my own, and the language of gratitude, arising from the impulse of a generous action, should be listened to with respect."

Having supped, we set to our bottle with renovated spirits, and drank and talked in such harmony, that we perceived not the animating power of our liquor, or the swift progress of time, until the clock struck two. The Captain then rose, and promising to call for me on the following evening, bade us adieu.

On Monday morning I attended

Caroline to the theatre, and informed Mr. Bantom of my competency to resume my occupation on the ensuing Wednesday. Expressing his satisfaction thereat, he bid me prepare for the part of *Lysimachus* that evening; intending himself to play *Alexander*; to Mr. Case he gave *Hepheston*, and to Mason *Clytus*; while to Mrs. Morris he assigned *Roxana*, and to Caroline *Statira*.

In the evening Captain Brent came to tea, telling us he had just had so violent a dispute with his sister, as to preclude peace ever being restored between them again, and that his brother-in-law had openly disapproved of his abruptness. The consequence of which was, that he had sent his trunk to the Warwick Inn, where he was resolved to remain during his stay, which would be considerably shortened by this family breach.

We accompanied Caroline to the theatre, where I offered to introduce my friend gratis.

"Never, Templeton," said he, "never did I yet enter a place of public amusement, without contributing my share to its support. And it is to me a matter of astonishment, that persons of respectability can go, cap in hand, to seek the favour which now you proffer me. They profess themselves admirers of the stage, yet are too mean and selfish to purchase the entertainment and instruction it affords them. They will cringe to an actor for the sake of his orders; enjoy his privilege the whole season, and then repay him perhaps with a dinner, or the purchase of a benefit ticket; thus meanly depriving the proprietor of his right. How despicable is this! Surely they must be aware, that if the drama

found

found no better friends than they, it must soon become extinct. How reproachful then is the reflection, that they are ever denying their assistance to the interests of a cause which they affect to venerate. Do not you respect such friends as those, nor again propose to me a favour which my pride could neither condescend to seek, or my honesty permit me to accept. And, now prithee, dear Templeton, keep that compliment you are about to let loose at me, *close hauled* to silence."

We continued to walk about the town till eight o'clock, at which hour we proceeded to the Social Club.

CHAP. XI.

ON entering, we discovered a number of gentlemen employed in smoaking, and in listening with great attention to two others, who seemed engaged in strong argument. One was a military officer, tall and handsome in his person, with features and manners strongly indicative of that happy acquirement which Lord Chesterfield politely defines, *modest assurance*, but which old maids are apt to misconstrue into *finished impudence*. The other was an elderly gentleman, whose countenance spoke peace and good-will to all. I soon learnt the former to be Captain Cannon, belonging to a regiment of foot quartered near the town, and the latter Sir Robert Mountain, a lineal descend-

descendant of one of the first families in the country.

Bowing to the company, and taking our seats, we listened to the subject, and found it duelling. The following couplet immediately occurred to my recollection:

> " What things but these could fierce Achilles tell?
> " Or what could fierce Achilles hear so well?"

" Nothing," said Captain Cannon, with a martial look, " nothing so much lifts a gentleman above the vulgar, or so strongly endears him to the other sex, as that high sense of honour, by which he walks secure amid the world, and lives in its respect."

" Sir," said Sir Robert Mountain, " the being who can sacrifice the love of God to worldly admiration, the gaze of

of fools, and wonder of the weak, is deserving its reproach. The wise will either condemn the vice, or pity the folly; for what less than folly would, for the gratification of its pride, awaken the anger of OMNIPOTENCE? O! give me the generous heart that can forget its resentment in philanthropy, and scorn the baseness that can triumph at the distraction of a wife, or the agony of a parent, over a murdered husband or a murdered child. But pray, Sir, tell me, to what honour does it lead, or what pleasure can it bring?"

"Pleasure!" cried the other, "to all the world can give, or that a soldier can desire—conquest, glory, and love!"

"Conquest!" demanded Sir Robert—"how can the death of an individual lead to conquest?"

"To the conquest of the fair, the triumph of human hearts, and ever-smiling love!" exclaimed the Captain, in raptures.

"I envy not your successes," replied Sir Robert—"the good mind revolts from, and Heaven will revenge them."

"Sir," vociferated the other, "I glory in saying, that I have killed more men, and seduced more women, than any person in England!"

Sir Robert started from his chair, fixed a stedfast look upon the soldier, and, while a tear rolled down his cheek, exclaimed,

"God! O God! can such depravity exist in a creature of thy forming?" Then withdrawing to a distant part of the room, re-seated himself in silence.

The whole company seemed struck with petrific amazement, and I perceived the indignation of my friend glance through his eye.

Captain Cannon remained silent some minutes, and examining by turns every countenance present, fixed his eyes at last upon his, and expecting, perhaps, a similitude of ideas, addressed him thus:

"Sir, you are, I perceive, an officer, and, I trust, entertain the same opinions as myself."

"You are mistaken," said Captain Brent—"I utterly abhor your doctrine, and confess myself disgusted at the sentiments that occasioned so much astonishment to yon worthy gentleman, whose heart, perhaps, bears too large a share of suavity for this world: I

allow, that circumstances may occur, when a duel becomes an act of justice; as there are men whose infamy can be awed by nothing else; and Nature, conscious of our frailties, seems to have implanted in our breasts the passion of revenge, in order to check the unlicensed conduct of villains, that we may, in your own phrase, walk secure amid the world. But the man whose pleasure can exist in the destruction of his fellow-creatures, or a subversion of their morals, ought to be discountenanced by, and expelled all society."

The animation with which my friend uttered this, excited a universal burst of admiration, while Sir Robert, unable to restrain his emotions, sprung to him, and seizing his hand, exclaimed,

"What would I give for such a son as thou art! I do entreat thy friend-

ship—make my house thy home; thou shalt at least find peace there, and content."

"Sir," returned Captain Brent, pressing the good Knight's hand, "our feelings are the same, and therefore ought we to be friends." Sir Robert then drew his chair, and seated himself by his side.

All approved of my friend's sentiments but Captain Cannon, who assuming a ferocious look, advised him to remember, that *he* had not the advantage of old age to shelter himself under.

"Shelter!" demanded he—"what shelter do I require?"

"It depends upon your future conduct," replied the other, "that you find no occasion to shelter yourself from my resentment."

My

My friend smiled, and returned,

"I am ashamed to hear a soldier *talk* so largely. I lodge at this house, Sir, and my name is Brent."

"Enough, Sir," answered Cannon, and stalked out of the room.

"It is impossible," said Sir Robert, after a short silence—"it is impossible that the sentiments he has uttered can have risen from his heart."

"Sir," said an old gentleman, who till then had seemed absorbed in thought, "if you judge of mankind by your own feelings, you have viewed them through a most partial medium. You would otherwise have known, that they differ as much in nature as they do in features. Some, indeed, diverge so widely from humanity, as would lead one to

suppose the soul of a fiend was embodied in their frame. Such a one is the object of your present consternation; and the story that first brought him to my knowledge, will fully prove the amplitude of his guilt, and stamp him a monster of abhorrence. I could almost arraign the justice of Heaven, for suffering him to exist. With the leave of this company, I will relate it."

Every person bowing assent, the gentleman proceeded as follows:

"A few years past, he became acquainted with a lady, virtuous and accomplished. Having first, by the recommendations of his person, and a display of mental acquirements, secured her heart, he proceeded to seduce her mind. Too well he succeeded, and in the end deprived her of that which alone makes woman lovely. For a time he triumphed

triumphed in his conquest, and the deluded lady forgot her reflections, in the soothing prospect of protracted love. But she was deceived: another object caught the eyes of her betrayer, whose charms more than equalled hers; for they were graced by the blush of youth, and virgin innocence.—Conceive her feelings, after the sacrifice she had made, on finding him daily waning from his ardent attachment, and at a loss to guess the cause! But at last, by interposing Providence, she discovered it—she discovered his vile attempts upon the fair flower he had in view: she discovered, gentlemen, that it was her daughter! She found him on his knees before her child, making his base proffers to her infant mind, and seeking her destruction! Happily, it was not too late—her youth was saved, and the villain from that hour renounced. But his vice is no impediment to his

 interest,

interest, for, by an artful insinuation, he still makes his way among the great; is courted, and esteemed by them."

The old gentleman had scarcely finished, when a waiter entered the room, and delivered a letter to Captain Brent. Every eye was bent upon him, as if suspicious of its contents.

He had no sooner perused it, than he arose, and, bowing to the company, expressed his concern at the necessity of leaving them, as the note brought him the sad tidings of a friend being seized with sudden illness, whom he was requested to attend immediately; then turning to me, begged I would accompany him. On taking leave, they entreated the happiness of seeing him again; and Sir Robert Mountain made him promise to visit him as early as possible; at the same time he invited me

me to accompany him, to which we with pleasure assented, and withdrew.

The Captain, instead of proceeding to his pretended friend, seized my arm, and hurried me up to his own room, where he presented me with the following letter:

"TO CAPTAIN BRENT.

"SIR,

"The offence I have this evening received from you, cannot, in honour, be passed over in silence. I offer you two alternatives: either beg my pardon before the company who witnessed your conduct, or, meet me at five to-morrow morning, westward of the barracks.

"From yours,

"THEODORE CANNON."

"Well," said I, and how mean you to proceed?"

"Surely, my friend," answered he, "that question is superfluous: certainly,

tainly, I shall meet him; and as certainly shall I expect you to second me."

"It is one of those hard duties," said I, "which it is impossible to deny."

"In the morning then, Templeton, you *will* be with me by a little after four."

"In the morning, my friend, I *must* be with you by the time you wish me." —We then parted.

I hastened home, and finding my landlady still up, requested she would call me by four in the morning; which she promised to do. I found Caroline hard at her studies, but, informing her of my intention to rise early, for which framing an excuse, we instantly retired to bed.

Caroline was soon asleep, but the expected event kept me awake all night. The dread of losing a dear friend, and being witness to his death, was a consideration too serious for me to rest upon; and I was up again, and dressed, before my landlady warned me that the clock had struck four.

Caroline was still sleeping, therefore, without disturbing her, I hurried to the lodgings of my friend.

The servants of the tavern were just risen, and, on my informing them that I had urgent business with Captain Brent, they suffered me to walk up to his room.

On entering, I saw him not; but observing the curtains of his bed close, I drew them, and found him in a composed sleep. For a few moments I gazed

gazed upon his features: they were expressive of the utmost tranquillity.

"Such," whispered I to myself, "such are the blessings of a noble soul; its days are glory, and its nights are peace." Jogging him on the shoulder, he instantly awoke.

"I remember," exclaimed he, "this is the day of honour."—He then rose, and uttered not a word till he was completely dressed, when, loading his pistols, and hanging on his sword, he said,

"Templeton, being once engaged on land service, I was attacked by a French Officer: he fought most gallantly, but fell beneath my sword. Two others, seeing his fate, came on me to revenge it: I stood against them both, till an English marine shot one, and thus made the contest even. The

other

other nobly kept his ground, but victory was on my side, and the youth followed his two friends to glorious death. I then felt no gloom upon me; my soul was elevated, for its task was honour. But now, I am oppressed with care, for with this man, my conquest or my fall will be equally inglorious. But justice leads me on," exclaimed he, his eyes brightening to the cause—"the manes of his murdered countrymen awakens, and betrayed innocence persuades me to revenge:" then encircling his arm in mine, we proceeded to the appointed spot.

Captain Cannon was already there, attended by two gentlemen.

The moment he perceived us, he advanced, and pulling off his hat, with much politeness informed my friend that

that the surgeon of his own regiment had kindly attended, in case of accident to either party.

Captain Brent returned his politeness, and thanking him for his care, demanded to know what weapons they should use.

" I have brought," continued he, " a brace of pistols and a sword; but I deem it fair to inform you, that I am accounted expert at the latter."

" I am esteemed no less so," returned the soldier, " therefore, with your consent, the sword shall be our choice."

" With all my heart, Sir," answered my friend, and drew his own from its scabbard. He then turned to me, and presenting a letter, whispered,

" Templeton,

"Templeton, should I chance to fall, open this upon the spot; it expresses my wishes respecting your conduct upon that event." Then, addressing himself to his antagonist, demanded if he was ready.

"I am waiting for you," cried he; on which they instantly measured swords.

Captain Cannon commenced with a furious assault, which was parried with the greatest ease by my friend. The soldier retired, in apparent wonder at the dexterity of his adversary, who now, in his turn assaulted the other, and after several thrusts and parries, made a full lunge in *quarte*, when the point of his sword rested on the belly of his opponent, but it entered not.

"Good Heaven!" exclaimed he, drawing

drawing back in surprize, "what means this!"

"Your weapon, Sir, struck against my button," said the other, and flew at him with determined resolution.

Captain Brent again received him with the utmost calmness, till his fury seemed to have spent itself, when pressing him extremely hard, and forcing him to retreat, his sword at last, pierced the upper part of his shoulder.

He instantly fell with the pain, while my friend, with the rest, hastened to his assistance.

The surgeon, to our surprize, instead of examining the wound, contented himself with tying a handkerchief over it, and, with the other gentleman, was proceeding to lead him off the field: but

but Captain Brent arrested him on his course, demanding, if he was conscious of doing his duty, in suffering the wound to go undrest? The other answered in the affirmative; observing, that it could be attended to with more convenience in the barracks than there.

"You are certainly wrong, Sir," insisted my friend, and fixing his hand upon the breast of the vanquished, who endeavoured to avoid his touch—"you are certainly wrong, and I trust that Captain Cannon will not suffer his wound to be endangered by such base neglect."

"Sir," said the latter, writhing in torture, "they act consistently with my wishes;"—then making a sudden exertion to disengage himself from the hold of my friend, his waistcoat flew unbuttoned in the struggle, and made a dis-

a discovery, which excited the following exclamation from Captain Brent:

"O, Templeton, my friend, look here! my suspicions are confirmed: the security of this wretch exists but in his cowardice!"

Upon examining, I felt under his shirt a hard resisting substance, inclosed in flannel, that covered all the fore part of his body, from the breast to his loins.

Cannon appeared overwhelmed with shame, yet mustered sufficient assurance to observe, that some future day might prove to his then successful opponent, he was no coward.

"Villain!" exclaimed Captain Brent, presume not to think I shall ever more deign to match with so worthless a foe.

For

For the honour I bear your profession, I will bury this secret in oblivion; but henceforth, learn to hold a higher respect for your fellow-creatures; retire to penitence with shame, and confess yourself the most contemptible of the human race." He then left him to pursue his own intention, while we returned to breakfast at the tavern.

Before parting, I delivered him back the note he had given me in charge, and promised to meet him on the following day.

CHAP. XII.

HAVING now recommenced my business, I played with unusual success till the night of my benefit arrived.

A few days preceding it, Captain Brent came and demanded tickets of me, saying, there were a number of people in the town whom he wished to oblige, and who would deem a treat to the play as handsome a compliment as he could shew them. On which, he took up a dozen of pit and box, then taking from his pocket-book a fifty pound bank-note, and placing it amongst my tickets, said,

"I trust, my friend, that no false delicacy

delicacy will prompt you to refuse me the gratification of rendering you this little service; for if you do, I shall conceive that you have not yet seen sufficient proofs of my sincerity and affection. I already possess more riches than my occasions require; why then should I not share the superflux with you, whom I ever did, and shall consider as a dear and valuable brother? You will not be so unkind as to refuse me, nor wound my feelings by a reply."

At that moment Caroline entering the room, agreeably to his request I remained silent.

I had each Monday attended him to the Social Club, where I had grown into some esteem with several of its members. I had also been with him to Sir Robert Mountain's, on which latter

latter visits Caroline generally accompanied us.

Sir Robert had a charming daughter, towards whom, it was easy to perceive a strong *penchant* from my friend, which seemed to meet the condescension of the young lady, and the hearty approbation of her father.

Through these connexions we had by far the best benefit of the company, clearing thirty pounds, which, with the liberal present of my friend, elevated me to a little independence, on which account I felt more pleased with my profession than I had done at any former period.

Caroline and myself now purchased a number of necessary articles, and furnished ourselves with handsome and fashionable clothes, in which we far

outshone

outshone all our competitors, who now observing the respectability of our connexions, treated us with infinite respect; some of them proving their esteem by borrowing a little cash of us.

I did not, in my prosperity, forget Miss Willison, whose indisposition I should have informed you, reader, proved only of short duration; but insisted on her acceptance of five guineas, which she received with reluctance, for she was generous in the extreme.

In less than a week after my benefit, Captain Brent took leave of me, in order to join his ship. We parted with mutual regret, and every mark of ingenuous friendship. "I leave my heart behind me," sighed he, "in the possession of Miss Mountain, whom I hope you will one day hail by the name of Brent."

Two days after his departure, we received, by letter, offers of a permanent engagement in one of the best established companies in the country, which was then performing at a seaport town, eighty miles distant from our present situation; the terms of which being liberal, we made no hesitation of accepting it.

Being under no articles of agreement with Mr. Bantom, I gave him notice that we should leave him at the expiration of the present week; at which he discovered much chagrin, breaking out into,

"I thought so! d—n me, I thought so; its the way with all of ye; you've just got money enough to buy a pair of new breeches to your a—e, and now d—n me, ye're going to hop; but ye may scamper away and be d—d."

I confess

I confess it cost me some sighs on leaving Miss Willison behind, who, at our parting, could not suppress her sorrow.

"Farewell, Templeton," said she, "I shall carry thy remembrance to the grave; and hope to find thee beyond it."

We took places in the inside of the stage, and without any occurrence worthy of notice, arrived in safety at the place of our destination, except that Caroline, on the way, had at intervals complained of sickness, the result of her situation, for she shewed the most *prominent* hopes of presenting me with a young actor.

We lodged the first night at the inn, and in the morning procured very decent lodgings, consisting of two rooms,

at five shillings a week, for which also, a young girl belonging to the house was occasionally to attend us.

Before dinner we waited upon the Proprietor, who received us with the usual politeness on such occasions, desiring we would attend him at the theatre next day at eleven o'clock, when he would appoint us characters.

There was nothing remarkable in this gentleman: his manners were unmarked with that *je ne sçais quoi* so indicative of the profession, and which has taught many a knowing spark to call after *me*, "there goes a player."

On the following morning Caroline, who had been out to purchase some necessaries, came running back, with transports in her face, exclaiming,

"O, Wil-

"O, William! dear William! I have found my father."

"My friend," cried I, eagerly, "good Heaven, where is he?"

"Here, here," said she, presenting me with a play-bill—"there, read him there! O God! I thank thee. I am happy beyond expression." On casting my eyes over it, I perceived the play to be *Hamlet*, and the *Ghost* by Mr. Sterling.

"Prepare, Caroline, instantly," said I, "and let us seek him: he shall know thy virtue, and be happy."

We hastened to the theatre, and observing a private door, over which was written, *Places for the Boxes taken here*, we entered it, and inquired for the Manager.

 The

The box-keeper informing us that it was an hour earlier than his time of attendance, conducted us to the green-room, where we hoped to have found our father and our friend. But on entering it, we discovered only five of the performers, who were rehearsing by themselves. Observing us, they coldly returned our salutation, and continued their business.

We seated ourselves upon one of the benches, and in less than a quarter of an hour were politely accosted by a young man, who stationed himself by my side. I immediately asked, whether he expected Mr. Sterling there soon? to which he answered, that Mr. Sterling having no business in the next performance, it was uncertain whether he would attend that morning or not, as he seldom came unless his duty compelled him. I then inquired where he

lived,

lived, when he promised, the moment he was at leisure, to conduct us to his lodgings.

The room now began to fill, but Caroline and myself were so absorbed in the pleasing hope of seeing our friend, that we gave no attention to their proceeding, and sat fixed in reverie, until we were roused at hearing our name called by the Manager, whom we observed standing directly before us. We instantly started from our seats, and making our obedience, solicited his pardon.

"You seem full of thought," said he, with much good-nature; "but actors should *think*, or they never can be great."

Turning round, I beheld the eyes of the whole company surveying us, and

enjoying our confusion; for, no doubt, we appeared like people just awakened from a dream.

The Manager, after some little conversation, gave Caroline the part of *Portia*, in the *Merchant of Venice*, and to me *Gratiano*, in the same play, for the second night of performance from that time, desiring us to attend rehearsal on the following morning.

Mr. Hunter (the gentleman who first addressed us) having finished his business, took us under his guidance to the door of the house where Mr. Sterling lodged, when apologizing for his haste, he bowed and left us. On knocking, an old gentleman made his appearance.

"We wish to see Mr. Sterling, Sir," said I.

"Mr.

"Mr. Sterling, Sir," answered he, "left this town early this morning."

"But he will return?" demanded I.

"He never will return again," replied the old gentleman.

"Gracious God!" exclaimed Caroline, "whither has he gone?"

"You seem particularly anxious, Madam—may I ask your name?"

"Templeton."

"Templeton!" re-echoed he; "and are you just arrived in this town? and are you engaged at the theatre?"

"Yes, Sir, to both your questions," answered I, impatiently.

"Then you are the person, Sir, whom he commissioned me to seek, and give this letter to. Will you walk in and read it?"

A moment's reflection taught me it would be most prudent to open it in my own room. Thanking him, therefore, and saying I might see him again, we flew to our lodgings, where, on opening the letter, we read as follows:

"TO MR. TEMPLETON.

"I have shewn my heart to a man who has trampled on its peace.—You are not, it is true, the author of my child's dishonour; but that you can triumph in its ruin, is a sufficient proof of your baseness.—However, you are safe—revenge is flown from my breast; it is lost in the unworthiness of its object.

"That my senses might not be shocked, I move them from those objects, upon which they could dwell but with horror.

"If

"If you have the smallest sentiments, or feeling left, I call its attention to this—that, henceforth, you will not speak of me, or give the most distant intimation of my having been known to you.

"HENRY STERLING."

I had scarcely finished, before Caroline dropped senseless on the floor.

I raised her in my arms, and full of fear, called the mistress of the house, by whose assistance she shortly recovered, but remained so extremely weak, as to require being immediately put to bed.

My concern was now for her, and I could not forbear venting loud reproaches at the cruelty of her father, whom I resolved, if posible, to forget. "He is unjust," said I, "and deserves his sufferings."

His letter plainly evinced an opinion of our being unmarried; but I thought it became him first to ascertain those doubts, before he gave freedom to his censure.

The sudden transition from hope to despair, which Caroline had experienced, was beyond the strength of her constitution to support. Her indisposition augmented, and necessitated me to excuse her to the Manager. I played, however, myself, according to appointment, and happily, gave ample satisfaction to him, as well as to the audience.

The theatre was infinitely superior to any at which I had yet appeared, both in size and decorations. The audience too differed wonderfully, for it was in great part composed of sailors, who were at times so riotous, that the

constables were obliged to be called in, which, however, availed but little, they being officers of whom they stood in very little awe.

The performers were, upon the whole, respectable, although there were none sufficiently striking to excite my envy. The leading ones played with firmness, but discovered no traits of eminent genius or refinement. There was one who had displayed himself in several characters upon the London boards, with some *eclat*, till measuring his powers with greater merit, he failed in the contest, and returned again to the country, where he resumed his former station with increased honours. For, through the medium of a friend, who was proprietor of the county newspaper, he taught the people to believe, that the consequence of his having left London arose from a partiality he bore

to them; and this flimsy pretence, joined to the contemptible and fulsome panegyric which the print continued to lavish upon him, served to establish him so firmly in the opinion of the populace, as bade defiance to truth and common sense.

It was near a fortnight before Caroline was able to make her appearance; when she came out in *Lady Macbeth*, which she played with such effect, as elevated her to the highest estimation both of the town and her employer.

She afterwards went through a range of the first walks in comedy, and became one of the most admired actresses in the company; for, beside the merits of her acting, she excelled every female in personal attractions and accomplishments.

In the mean while, I never rose above mediocrity in my cast of characters; for here, seniority seemed to have the advantage: yet was my pride often gratified by a burst of applause, when my partners of the scene were, perhaps, passed over in silence; although, by their laboured exertions, they seemed to expect the whole. This neglect of the audience, they at times felt so keenly, that they could not restrain their disappointment, which they discovered by disclaiming my conversation, and rejecting my friendship.

But jealousy, envy, and vanity, are the concomitant failings of performers; and such stories might be enumerated of those in whom they have more strongly predominated, as would tend to lessen them much in the opinion of the wise. Thus did an actress of Drury-Lane refuse to come forward on her

duty before a full and impatient audience, because her robe was less splendid than that of the heroine of the play; and thus did an actor of Covent-Garden, when the veil of caution was withdrawn by truth-telling wine, boast, that the stage had not another person fit to play in his company. These qualities, however, are incentives to emulation, which, indeed, is but envy spurred on by confidence, and are found to rule the breasts of all who build their happiness on public praise.

Every night the green-room, and indeed each space behind the curtain, was crowded with strangers; people whose countenance and support the proprietor did not think proper to sacrifice, by refusing to admit; many of them being persons of the first rank and consequence, who, no doubt, paid liberally for the indulgence. Several

proffered high court to Caroline, and sought to win her favour by every attention. But she gave them few opportunities, as she seldom stood apart from me; and frequently, on my entering the green-room, has she left them in the very middle of a compliment, and advanced to meet me.

"Caroline," said I one time, on seeing her leave a young nobleman who was presenting her an orange, "you are too abrupt with your friends, and treat their politeness too rigidly."

"O, it will improve their taste," returned she; "for it is depraved by egotism: they seek my regard from a love they bear themselves; and their offerings are tinctured with a poison which their lustre cannot hide."

An actress who keeps herself aloof

from

from temptation, must possess the virtue of an angel!—Her situation, the levity of the profession, and the number of surrounding admirers, all conspire to hush the voice of reason and morality; while the very sensibility her tasks require, by painting every event in fallacious colours, tends but to lead her from prudence into ruin. And let not those ladies of *untried* chastity too freely censure them: their homely features, or their humble merits, secure them from the assaults of gallantry, while the attractive graces of the former call forth all its art. And let them also remember, that in the amusement and instruction which their labours give the world, the frailties of nature ought to be forgotten.

One evening, on entering the theatre, I was arrested in my hurry by a soldier, who was standing sentinel at the doors. Examining his features, I recog-

recognized him to be a brother-actor, who had been with me in the company of Mr. Frank. Shaking his hand, I demanded what had reduced him to that condition.

"Reduced!" said he—"you should rather ask, what good fortune has elevated me to the state I am now in; for if redemption from beggary and starvation, and the being placed in plenty, can be called an elevation, you have certainly a right to compliment me on that head."

I promised to see him again; but, shortly after this, an event took place, which, for a time, entirely precluded the remembrance of every other consideration.

One Sunday, having ranged about the country with Mr. Hunter, who was

the

the only person of the theatre with whom I had formed any intimacy, I returned home about eleven at night, and was surprized to find Caroline absent.

On inquiring of the people in the house, they answered, that she had walked out after dinner, and had not since returned.

I suspended my alarm, under an opinion of her being on a visit to some ladies of the theatre; but I was far from easy in that consideration, it being the first time she had ever gone abroad unknown to me.

At a loss where to seek her, I remained in my room till I was thrown into a degree of madness, on hearing the clock strike two. "Good God, she is lost!" exclaimed I, and flying out of the house, ran

ran to the lodgings of those persons with whom I hoped she might be; but none of those had seen her.

I returned ag the lodgings of those zonsing the pro hom I hoped she might inquired for Cf those had seen her. swered, that th

urned again to my hor

"O assist my the people from their re find her." d for Caroline. Still , that they knew not of

The landlorc told me he was assist me then." cried r."

"Fly," said and question a landlord dressed hims been torn frome he was ready.

could virtu betray me! Fly," said I—"fly round the streets, to question all you meet! continued my porn from me by force! impelled by th virtue yield—never me! Then rushing ness, leaving him behi

of horror flashed across my imagination: it was, that she might be drowned. This fatal opinion possessed itself so strongly of my mind, that it worked me up to frenzy. I remained on the shore, acting every extravagance that madness could inspire, till at last exclaiming, "O Caroline, thou art lost! and here I follow thee!"—I plunged into the deep.

The waves seemed to oppose my design, by repelling me to their surface. Again I descended, and struggled with the resisting element, till I sunk exhausted.

But the assent of Fate was wanting to complete my wish.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

Printed by B. M'Millan,
Bow-Street, Covent-Garden.